

SUPPLEMENTS TO
VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE



Violence in Ancient Christianity

Victims and Perpetrators



Edited by
ALBERT C. GELJON AND
RIEMER ROUKEMA

BRILL

Violence in Ancient Christianity

Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae

TEXTS AND STUDIES OF EARLY CHRISTIAN LIFE AND LANGUAGE

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Abbreviations

Generally the abbreviations of biblical books and ancient texts follow the guidelines set out in *The SBL Handbook of Style* (Peabody Mass. 1999).

ACO	Acta Conciliorum Oecumenicorum
AGLB	Aus der Geschichte der lateinischen Bibel
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt
AQDGM	Ausgewählte Quellen zur deutschen Geschichte des Mittelalters
BAug	Bibliothèque augustinienne
CCSL	Corpus Christianorum Series Latina
CSCO	Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
CSEL	Corpus Scriptorum Ecclesiasticorum Latinorum
EKK	Evangelisch-katholischer Kommentar zum Neuen Testament
FaCh	Fathers of the Church
FKDG	Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Dogmengeschichte
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller
JCPS	Jewish and Christian Perspective Series
JThS	Journal of Theological Studies
LCL	Loeb Classical Library
MGH.AA	Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Auctores Antiquissimi
MGH.SRM	Monumenta Germaniae Historica. Scriptores rerum Merovingicarum
NPNF	Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers
OECT	Oxford Early Christian Texts
PG	Patrologiae cursus completus: series Graeca
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus: series Latina
SC	Sources Chrétiennes
TTH	Translated Texts for Historians
YPR	Yale Publications in Religion

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Introduction

On the 7th and 8th of October 2011, the Dutch Foundation for Ancient Christian Studies (*Stichting voor Oudchristelijke Studiën*) celebrated its fiftieth anniversary with a conference on 'Violence in ancient Christianity: victims and perpetrators'. The relationship between religion and violence nowadays often figures on the agenda of politicians, journalists, and scholars. Although this interest is also reflected in the theme of the conference, the subject as such is not new in the domain of Ancient Christian Studies, witness the numerous articles, books, and editions of relevant ancient texts concerning martyrdom and persecutions, which have been published in the past.

In the opening lecture on 'Religious violence between Greeks, Romans, Christians and Jews', Jan Bremmer (University of Groningen) offered some elucidating considerations. Although the expression 'religious violence' occurs in the title of his contribution, he argues that it is neither a neutral nor an accurate term, because in late antiquity the roles of violence and religion were very different from their present-day understanding. He takes a critical stance toward the view that polytheistic religions are more tolerant than monotheistic ones, and gives several examples of violent intolerance of polytheists in both ancient and modern times. He concludes that before the victory of Christianity no pagan author would plead religious tolerance. Concerning pagan violence against Christians, Bremmer underlines Tertullian's remark that not all Roman governors were bloodthirsty. Regarding the policy of emperor Decius, he maintains against other scholars that his edict of 249 CE, according to which all inhabitants of the Roman empire had to offer to the gods, was in effect directed against the Christians, because they were the real victims; yet Christians most likely exaggerated the numbers of martyrs. After Christianity had become the dominant religion, testimonies to Christian violence against pagans and their temples do exist, but Bremmer points to those scholars whose critical analysis of the literary and archaeological sources contests their historical reliability. In his view, cases of destruction of pagan temples by Christians were exceptions. He argues that in the fourth and fifth centuries many of these temples were not visited anymore and a fair number of them were transformed to churches. Without downplaying rhetorical and physical violence by Christians against Jews he notes that sometimes the sources are less clear than one might wish, as his example of the tombs of the Maccabean martyrs in Antioch demonstrates. He concludes that in any case such violence was less terrible than in the Middle Ages and later times.

Danny Praet (Ghent University) also discusses the question how thoroughly Christians were persecuted during the first three centuries and, furthermore, to which extent they committed violent actions themselves in this period. Before going to a few instances of seemingly religious violence in this context he refers to the opposing opinions of, on the one hand, those who reduce religious violence to social, economic, political, or ethnic violence, and, on the other hand, those who incriminate religion, especially monotheistic religions, of causing terrible intolerance. He intends to adopt a middle position in these debates. He shows that Judaism, the monotheistic religion from which Christianity sprang, could indeed inspire its adherents to violence against the worshippers of 'pagan' gods, which is exemplified by the Jewish revolt in 115–117 CE. In addition, some Jewish writings that were transmitted by Christians also testify to violence against 'pagans' on a literary level, as can be seen in the *Testament of Job*, the book of *Jubilees*, and the *Sybilline Oracles*. Praet argues that the Christians' refusal of the Roman *pax deorum* system was felt as cultural violence which provoked the wrath of the gods, as a consequence of which the Christians were singled out for persecution, although he agrees with Bremmer that the number of martyrs has often been exaggerated. The accusation that Christians ridiculed the gods, and a Christian prohibition of sacrilege toward the idols, seem to witness that deriding and irreverent actions concerning the 'pagan' gods did indeed take place. Ample attention is paid to Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, which was commissioned by Septimius Severus' wife Julia Domna. This work advocates a tolerant commonwealth of all religions, which in the view of the author was disrupted, however, by the unacceptable Jewish pretension of exclusiveness. Although Christians are not mentioned in this work, Praet contends that Philostratus' rejection of Jewish exclusivism probably was implicitly also directed toward the Christians. On the basis of this work Sossianus Hierocles wrote a comparison of Apollonius and Jesus, in which he demonstrated the former's superiority. It is remarkable that the same Hierocles also participated in the severe persecution of Christians during the reign of Diocletianus.

Fred Ledegang (PhD University of Nijmegen) analyses Eusebius of Caesarea's view of the emperor who brought about a radical change of the Christians' position in the Roman empire, Constantine. He demonstrates Constantine's enduring familiarity with the Roman imperial culture and the ancient comparison of his reign with the new age inaugurated by Augustus. In his own way, Constantine respected the *pax deorum* by including the Christian worship into it, of which religion he had himself become an adherent. He maintained Augustus' title of *Pontifex Maximus*, in which capacity he was responsible both for the ancient Roman and for the Christian religions. Yet he started the gradual

restriction of the ancient pagan rites. He also interfered in the Donatist and Arian controversies within the Christian Church, and convened synods in order to force solutions. Eusebius is clearly in favour of Constantine's endeavours to strive for unity in the empire and in the Church. With others scholars, however, Ledegang argues that Eusebius naïvely passes too favourable a judgment on the first Christian emperor, since according to other sources Constantine was also involved in bloodshed in his family and numerous wars. In Eusebius' view, it was the Christian God who sided with the emperor and granted him victory. He considered Constantine not only a new Augustus, but also a second Moses. One may conclude that his biased praise of the Christian emperor reflects the relief felt among Christians about the end of the persecutions.

Hans Teitler (Utrecht University) demonstrates that the alleged violence against Christians perpetrated by the only pagan emperor after Constantine, Julian 'the Apostate', is in need of a critical assessment. He admits that Julian was not friendly toward the Christians and that one might accuse him of discrimination, for instance by issuing a law which prohibited Christian teachers from teaching the classics. However, by carefully comparing different sources Teitler demonstrates that later testimonies to bloody persecutions are not confirmed by authors who were contemporaries of the emperor whose policy they abhorred. In fact, it seems that Julian had decided not to follow the example of Diocletian which had created many martyrs that were subsequently honoured by the Christians. Yet Teitler also points out that Julian's pagan subjects did not always imitate his restraint, and that the emperor condoned their violent actions against the Christians.

Elizabeth Boddens Hosang (PhD Tilburg University) studies the attitude of Christians toward Jews by investigating Church council texts and Roman legislation from the fourth to the sixth centuries. She notes that in spite of the disasters that had struck the Jews in the wars in 70 and 135 CE, Judaism was still a vital religion that welcomed converts and other people who showed interest, even though it is not clear whether active proselytizing took place. Council texts and legislation from the fourth to sixth centuries reflect that, at grass root level, Christians continued to interact with Jews, were not opposed, e.g., to giving their daughters to Jews in marriage, and were interested to obtain blessings from Jews. Such interaction happened not only after Christianity had got the upper hand and numerous new Christian converts might be less motivated to lead particular Christian lives solely according to the prescriptions of their bishops, but also in the very beginning of the fourth century, as the canons of the Council of Elvira (305 CE) demonstrate. Other texts that are discussed here include the *Theodosian Code*, Council canons of Laodicea, the Apostolic Canons from the *Apostolic Constitutions*, and the Council canons of Clermont

and Orléans. Boddens Hosang shows that from the end of the fourth century onward the interdictions to share in Jewish celebrations and rituals become more and more severe, which is confirmed by John Chrysostom's homilies *Against the Jews*. In fifth- and sixth-century Gaul the Jews are more and more marginalized and signs of growing aggression and hatred become visible. She concludes that the violence that began in verbal and textual attacks gradually led to actual physical harm to Jews and their property.

As to violence perpetrated by Christians, Cyril, archbishop of Alexandria from 412 to 444, has a reputation, both among scholars and on a more popular level, which is reflected, for instance, in the film *Agora*, released in 2009. Hans van Loon (Centre for Patristic Research at University of Tilburg and VU University Amsterdam) investigates what the primary sources really have to say about Cyril's involvement in violence toward Jews and in the murder of the philosopher Hypatia, during the first years of his episcopate (412–418). These sources are Socrates' *Church History*, John of Nikiu's *Chronicle*, and excerpts from the Neoplatonic philosopher Damascius and from Hesychius of Miletus. First he discusses a text-critical difficulty concerning Cyril's election as archbishop, which comes down to the question whether his election took place with support of the local commander of the troops or in spite of the latter's preference for another candidate. Van Loon opts for the second, traditional reading, contrary to the authoritative critical edition of Socrates' *Church History*, which implies that from the beginning of his episcopate Cyril stood up to the secular authorities. Also afterwards, Cyril had a difficult relationship with the local prefect, Orestes. Subsequently, Cyril's closing down of Novatian churches is put into its historical context, and his fierce opposition to the Jewish religion and to the Jews themselves is discussed. On the one hand, Van Loon admits that Cyril's policy with regard to the Jews cannot be called Christian, even though a number of Christians had been killed by Jews. On the other hand, he points out that Socrates, who was critical of Cyril, did mention the plundering of synagogues and the Jews' expulsion from Alexandria, but not the murder and killing of Jews by Christians. The sources of the murder of Hypatia and Cyril's role in this event appear to disagree over the latter's involvement and responsibility. Van Loon concludes that the widespread view that the archbishop was directly responsible for Hypatia's death is not correct. In so far as Cyril may yet be held responsible, it is because he fostered a climate in which such a murder could take place. In this context, the role of the *parabalani* is analyzed as well. Although some modern historians concluded that these guards committed the murder of Hypatia, the sources that recount the story of her death do not confirm this. From his investigation of the primary sources Van Loon concludes that the first years of Cyril's episcopate were volatile, but that even the critical

historian Socrates does not involve him personally in anybody's death. For the subsequent years of his episcopate till 444 the sources do not mention any more disturbances between the different ethno-religious groups in Alexandria. Van Loon recommends, however, that more research be done on Cyril's own works, in which the archbishop criticizes both the Jewish worship and Greek polytheism.

An exceptional case of violence in the fourth century is the execution of Priscillian of Avila, the ascetic, charismatic, self-made theologian of senatorial rank who became bishop of Avila probably in 381. Yet he met with so much opposition that in spite of his petition to pope Damasus and his appeal to emperor Maximus a secular lawsuit in Trier had him tortured and sentenced to decapitation. In this tragedy Joop van Waarden (University of Amsterdam) sees a first instance of the age-long struggle between pope and emperor. He focuses on the question how this tragedy could take place, or, in the words of the title of his contribution, on 'the inability to handle a conflict'. It did not help Priscillian that he was accused of gnostic and Manichaean tendencies and of meetings with indecent women, and that his polite and well-formulated petition to Damasus was yet not submissive enough and did not leave the pope a loophole. Unwillingly, Van Waarden argues, Priscillianus thus handed himself over to the secular authorities, who judged he was a heretic and deserved death, together with a number of his disciples. In Van Waarden's analysis, what had been missing here was sagacious conflict management.

A longer chapter on the relationship between state and church concerns Augustine's development in the acceptance of coercion and violence toward non-Catholic Christians, especially the Donatists. Paul van Geest (Tilburg University and VU University Amsterdam) investigates this theme by focusing on Augustine's roles of mediator, judge, teacher, and mystagogue. After a survey of the acceptance of state interference in ecclesiastical affairs in the third and fourth centuries, he sketches the state measures that were eventually taken against the Donatist clergy, whose church was considered heretical and therefore disrupting the unity of the empire. How did Augustine legitimize this policy? In Van Geest's analysis, Augustine initially, from 391 to 399, took the stance of a peaceful mediator, when he proposed thirteen rules for a good dialogue with the Donatists, in order to reintegrate them into the Catholic church without state interference. From 399 onward his strategy toward the Donatists changed, in that he began to accept state interference and coercion in order to heal the schism in the body of Christ. The violence perpetrated by the Donatist *circumcelliones* contributed to his changing attitude and brought about that Augustine sharply interrogated Donatist bishops so that, according to Van Geest, he took the role of a judge rather than a peaceful mediator.

But since in early 405 emperor Honorius promulgated an edict that forced the Donatists to be reconciled with the *Catholica*, Augustine felt free to take the role of a teacher who explained why the unity of the church may not be broken; in those years he could trust that Honorius' guidelines would be applied anyway, so that he himself did not need to legitimize state coercion. The last stage that Van Geest distinguishes in Augustine's attitude runs from 408 to 419, when the bishop assumed the role of a mystagogue who emphasizes that God himself sometimes makes use of coercion in order to save the human being. In Augustine's view this justified state coercion to lead the Donatists back to the Catholic church, who is their loving mother. In this period Augustine's role of mystagogue, in Van Geest's analysis, includes the roles of mediator and teacher.

Rejection and repression of deviating religious groups is reflected in the language that their adversaries use to designate them. As a testimony to this rhetorical violence, Gerard Bartelink (University of Nijmegen) investigates the depreciating terms that were developed for such groups in late antiquity. After a few examples of ironic interpretations of personal names and pagan designations of Christians he turns to his main field of interest, the Latin terms from the fourth century and the first decades of the fifth century that reflect the repression of 'heresies' by the leading religious authorities of those times. He demonstrates that deviating groups were not allowed to use the common Catholic terms for their churches, leaders, and martyrs, and were characterized by different, pejorative expressions. Bartelink presents a range of terms that were applied instead of *ecclesia*, in order to make clear that such groups did not represent the true church. Toward the end of the fourth century sometimes neutral terms too were used for such groups instead of the usual Catholic designations, which shows again, in Bartelink's analysis, that at that time the rights of religious minorities were strongly restricted. He concludes that gradually a standard vocabulary and a traditional range of invectives were available to designate any heresy.

Opposite to violence stand mildness and the expression of love. Jesus had even taught his disciples to love their enemies and to pray for them. Riemer Roukema (Protestant Theological University, Groningen) explores how this teaching was received and interpreted in the first five centuries of Christianity. First he distinguishes the period during which Christians met with violence from Roman authorities, prior to Constantine's reign. He notes that in these centuries this teaching of Jesus was transmitted among Christians without any reserve, and that it functioned as an apologetic argument toward the authorities, as it would demonstrate that Christians had and practiced a lofty morality. Roukema shows that Christians also considered the Jews as enemies whom they had to love. Furthermore, he points out which role Jesus' teaching of

love and prayer for enemies played in the debate with gnostics and Marcionites in these centuries. The second part of his contribution deals with the period in which the Christians were initially tolerated and gradually acquired more and more political influence and power. Roukema shows that in these centuries Jesus' instruction was not forgotten. Yet bishops like Ambrose and Augustine admitted that this love for enemies could not be expected from all Christians; it applied particularly to those who wished to be perfect. In the bishops' view, Christian authorities had to apply this instruction in their personal lives only, which implied that as public figures they were not forbidden to wage wars. In Roukema's survey, Catholic preachers emphasized that Christ's appeal to love one's enemies entailed a missionary attitude toward unbelievers, Jews, and heretics, whereas at the same time this benevolent approach was contradicted by the virulent criticism of Jews, Judaizing Christians, and other heretics. What remains, is the impression of an ambivalent reception of Jesus' instruction of love for enemies.

As was remarked already, religious violence is also known in our times, and it is tempting to draw parallels between our times and antiquity. Although it was not the aim of the conference to study religious violence in the present time as well and to compare it with this phenomenon in antiquity, several papers have shown that we should not draw such parallels too quickly. There are similarities indeed, but the social context in which violence took place and the attitude toward violence were different. Furthermore, religious extremists were not the only ones, as one might think, who resorted to religious violence. In many aspects ancient society was like our societies, but still different, also regarding the role of religious violence.

To conclude, we are grateful for the inclusion of these proceedings in the series *Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae* and for the assistance of the staff of Brill's publishing house.

Religious Violence between Greeks, Romans, Christians and Jews

Jan N. Bremmer

When the first reports about the mass murder on the Norwegian island of Utøya in the summer of 2011 started to come in, German television immediately suggested that a Muslim fundamentalist had been at work. Subsequently, the murderer Anders Breivik was described as a Christian fundamentalist and, finally, everybody became much more reticent in their characterization of him. The confusion at the time is illustrative of Western prejudices about religious violence, but the different reports also show that it is not always that simple to distinguish between religious, political and social motives. Given this confusion in modern times with all our information technology, how much more difficult will it be to clarify the problem of religious violence in antiquity?

The theme of the conference on which the contents of this book are based is rather fashionable. In recent years we have witnessed a tsunami of books on religious violence in antiquity, but secular violence has also become a favourite conference theme.¹ To vary the title of a famous book by the great Dutch

1 See most recently E. Sauer, *The Archaeology of Religious Hatred in the Roman and Early Medieval World* (Stroud 2003); J. Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt. Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden und Juden im Osten des Römischen Reiches* (Berlin 2004); M. Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 2005); J.-M. Bertrand (ed.), *La violence dans les mondes grec et romain* (Paris 2005); H.A. Drake (ed.), *Violence in Late Antiquity: perceptions and practices* (Aldershot, Burlington 2006); J. Styka (ed.), *Violence and aggression in the ancient world* (Cracow 2006); J. Hahn et al. (eds), *From Temple to Church: Destruction and Renewal of Local Cultic Topography in Late Antiquity* (Leiden 2008); Th. Sizgorich, *Violence and Belief in Late Antiquity: Militant Devotion in Christianity and Islam* (Philadelphia 2009); E.J. Watts, *Riot in Alexandria: Tradition and Group Dynamics in Late Antique Pagan and Christian Communities* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 2010); B. Isele, *Kampf um Kirchen, Religiöse Gewalt, heiliger Raum und christliche Topographie in Alexandria und Konstantinopel (4. Jh)* (Münster 2010); J. Hahn (ed.), *Staat und religiöser Konflikt. Imperiale und locale Verwaltung und die Gewalt gegen Heiligtümer in der Spätantike* (Berlin 2011); L. Lavan and M. Mulryan (eds), *The Archaeology of Late Antique Paganism* (Leiden 2011); P.G.R. de Villiers and J.W. van

historian Johan Huizinga (1872–1945): our own time clearly throws back its shadows upon antiquity.² But can we really speak about religious violence in antiquity? And when we do so, what do we mean?

At first instance, the term ‘religious violence’ seems wholly unproblematic in a conference about violence against and by Christians. However, that appears not to be the case. That is why I want to start with some observations about the usage of the term and its possible pitfalls when applied to antiquity (§1). Next, by concentrating on the role of the Greeks and Romans, I intend to contribute to the debate, which was initiated by the famous Egyptologist Jan Assmann, about whether monotheism, rather than polytheism, leads to religious violence (§2). Then I will focus on the violence of the Romans against the Christians (§3), and of the Christians against the pagans (§4). I will conclude with some observations about the violence of the Christians against the Jews (§5). To be complete, I should also have included violence of Christians against Christians. This particular form of religious violence has been the subject of a recent, imposing 900 page book by Brent Shaw—albeit only partially, as he focuses his study on the struggles between the Donatists and the orthodox Christians.³ However, it would transcend the limits of this chapter to give it the close attention it deserves, and this aspect of religious violence has, therefore, to wait for another occasion.

The scope of the subject is enormous, so I will limit my contribution to the period between the trial of Socrates and the demise of paganism in the fourth century AD. However, it is not so much my aim to study here in detail specific cases of religious violence. I am more interested in methodological questions and historiographical developments than in a persecution in year x or a reli-

Henten (eds), *Coping with Violence in the New Testament* (Leiden 2012). M. Juergensmeyer et al. (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence* (Oxford 2013) contains several articles on antiquity.

2 Cf. J. Huizinga, *In de schaduwen van morgen* (Haarlem 1935) = *In the Shadow of Tomorrow* (New York 1936).

3 B. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and sectarian hatred in the age of Augustine* (Cambridge 2011), well reviewed by C. Ando, <http://bmcr.brynmawr.edu/2012/2012-08-30.html>; see also the comments on Shaw’s book by M. Tilley, D. Frankfurter and P. Fredriksen together with Shaw’s response in *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 21 (2013), 291–309. Note also N. McLynn, ‘Christian Controversy and Violence in the Fourth century’, *Kodai* 3 (1992), 15–44, reprinted as Chapter II in McLynn, *Christian Politics and Religious Culture in Late Antiquity* (Aldershot 2009); K.L. Noethlichs, ‘Revolution from the top? “Orthodoxy” and the persecution of heretics in imperial legislation from Constantine to Justinian’, in C. Ando and J. Rüpke (eds), *Religion and Law in Classical and Christian Rome* (Stuttgart 2006), 115–125.

gious riot in year y. Moreover, it is precisely in the area of early Christianity that we can often recognise the ideological presuppositions of scholars. Not that there is something amiss with presuppositions. It would be an illusion to think that we could analyse without them. But in our post-modern time we may expect scholars to meditate sometimes about the choices they make and the themes they select for research. Given the size of the subject, my observations can only be selective and do not aim at completeness.

1 Religious Violence

The term 'violence' may not seem problematic, but we should realise that in the Western world the meaning of the term has expanded in such a manner that we use the term violence to describe emotional, intellectual, and verbal confrontations as well as mere misrepresentation of another person's opinion: consequently, we now sometimes feel the need to speak of 'physical violence'. We should also realise that the place of physical violence in our world is rather different from that in antiquity when violence was, so to speak, normal, whereas in our Western world violence is rather abnormal for most people in daily life. In fact, the violence of authorities in antiquity must have been such that we can only surmise its extent and impact. At the same time, though, we have to differentiate between the administrations of violence in various parts of the Roman empire. To mention just one example: apparently, domestic violence in the case of sexual unfaithfulness seems to have been more acceptable in the Latin and Germanic West than in the Greek East.⁴

Moreover, we should also be aware of the extent of the term 'violence'. In a recent and stimulating essay about the rise of intolerance in late antiquity, the Greek ancient historian Polymnia Athanassiadi states: 'banalisée à travers le martyre et le prosélytisme, la violence est ambiante dans la société de l'Empire'.⁵ The combination of martyrdom and proselytism, as if their effects were more or less similar, is exemplary of an approach that is not helpful. Actually, we know very little about the ways Christianity spread in the Roman empire, as we have hardly any reports of individual conversions outside litera-

4 J.A. Schroeder, 'John Chrysostom's critique of spousal violence', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 12 (2004), 413–442; L.D. Dossey, 'Wife beating and manliness in late antiquity', *Past & Present* 199 (2008), 3–40.

5 P. Athanassiadi, *Vers la pensée unique. La montée de l'intolérance dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris 2010), 48.

ture such as the *Octavius* of Minucius Felix.⁶ One thing is certain: martyrs lost their lives, whereas converts could sometimes improve their career prospects. To combine the two categories as if they were more or less similar or comparable is, to be honest, not illuminating. Yet in a certain respect Athanassiadi is representative of many authors on late antiquity. Most of the books mentioned in my first note have the term ‘Violence’ or ‘Gewalt’ in the title. Understandably, we are all conditioned by our experiences of ethnic cleansing, civil wars, mass murders and suicide attacks to think immediately of the worst. Yet there are many points on the spectrum of violence: from legal prohibitions to clear-cut murders. It will be important to arrive at nuanced judgements, something for which books with ‘Violence’ or ‘Gewalt’ in the title without any indication about the nature of the violence discussed are not particularly helpful.

The qualification ‘religious’ in ‘religious violence’ is problematic too. It has gradually become accepted by historians of religion that the ancient world did not have a specific term for religion as we know it. Religion was such an integral part of society—more recently we have come to call it ‘embedded’—that it did not exist as a separate sphere of society, just as ancient law and economics did not yet constitute separate spheres.⁷ It was only in the later eighteenth century and with the decline of importance of religion in public life in Western Europe, that religion was increasingly located in the inner life of people. This development went concomitant with an increasing importance attached to belief rather than to the practice of religious rituals. It is only in more recent times that we can say: ‘I believe but I don’t belong to a church’. Or: ‘I believe but I don’t practise’—attitudes that would have been unthinkable in previous centuries. In addition, in the last 50 years the mainstream Western churches have increasingly abandoned concerning themselves with the private lives of people. Nowadays mainstream or progressive churches and denominations prefer to say something about famines and wars in countries far away rather than pronouncing judgements on the social, financial or sexual behaviour of their members at home. The difference between an ‘embedded religion’ and the far-reaching privatisation of religion that we can increasingly observe today in the Western world is of course schematic. Yet there is a clear trend in

6 J. Engberg, “‘From among You are We. Made, not Born are Christians’: Apologists’ Accounts of Conversion before 310AD”, in J. Ulrich et al. (eds), *Continuity and Discontinuity in Early Christian Apologetics* (Frankfurt 2009), 49–77; J.N. Bremmer, *The Rise of Christianity through the Eyes of Gibbon, Harnack and Rodney Stark* (Groningen 2010²), 68.

7 J.N. Bremmer, ‘Religion’, ‘Ritual’ and the Opposition ‘Sacred vs. Profane’: Notes Towards a Terminological ‘Genealogy’, in F. Graf (ed.), *Ansichten griechischer Rituale. Festschrift für Walter Burkert* (Stuttgart, Leipzig 1998), 9–32 (10–14).

the West to speak more and more in terms of belief rather than in terms of practices. Moreover, in recent years the ongoing redefinition of religion as a separate, private sphere of life has been accelerated by the emergence of the multi-cultural society as an ideal, something we all have been able to witness in our own lifetimes.

I have discussed the problem of the terminology in some detail, in order to demonstrate that 'religious violence' is not a neutral term. Moreover, given the absence of a clearly demarcated religious sphere in antiquity it is by no means an always accurate phrase. Although from the third century AD onwards we can notice the beginnings of a development of terms for individual religions, such as Judaism and Christianity,⁸ the term 'religious violence' is a modern coinage, an 'emic' term, to use a well-known anthropological distinction. The lack of an 'etic' term in antiquity also explains why in that period the Greeks did not have a word for religious intolerance—an absence that has, rather curiously, aroused the surprise of Athanassiadi.⁹ Although she does not note it, the Greeks naturally did not have a term for religious tolerance either.

2 Monotheism or Polytheism or Both?

As we already mentioned, in the last two decades the reflection about the roots of religious violence has been greatly stimulated by a number of studies by Jan Assmann.¹⁰ Although he started his career as an Egyptologist, since the 1990s Jan Assmann has developed into an important cultural historian, increasingly directing his attention to the origins of religious violence, the roots of which he locates in monotheism in particular. Although he published his first thoughts

8 L. Foschia, 'Le nom du culte et ses dérivés à l'époque impériale', in S. Follet (ed.), *L'Hellénisme d'époque romaine* (Paris 2004), 15–35; A. ter Brugge, *Between Rome and New Jerusalem* (Diss. Kampen 2009), 169–187; D. Boyarin, 'Rethinking Jewish Christianity: An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category (to which is Appended a Correction of my Border Lines)', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 99 (2009), 7–36 (12–27); G. Casadio, 'Religio versus Religion', in J.H.F. Dijkstra et al. (eds), *Myths, Martyrs, and Modernity: Studies in the History of Religions in Honour of Jan N. Bremmer* (Leiden 2010), 301–326; B. Nongbri, *Before Religion* (New Haven, London 2012).

9 Athanassiadi, *Vers la pensée unique*, 40.

10 In this paragraph I make freely use of my 'Religious Violence and its Roots: a view from antiquity', *Asdiwal* 6 (2011), 71–79; for a good discussion of Assmann's thesis, see now also R. Bloch, 'Polytheismus und Monotheismus in der paganen Antike: Zu Jan Assmanns Monotheismus-Kritik', in R. Bloch et al. (eds), *Fremdbilder—Selbstbilder. Imaginationen des Judentums von der Antike bis in die Neuzeit* (Basel 2010), 5–24.

about the subject in his fascinating *Moses the Egyptian*, the events of 9/11 and their aftermath have certainly contributed to an increase in scholarly interest in his ideas, an interest, however, that is especially to be found in the world of German Roman-Catholic and Protestant theologians rather than among scholars outside Germany.¹¹

With his thesis Assmann is standing in a long tradition that seems to have begun with the great Scottish philosopher David Hume. In his *Natural History of Religion* (Section 9) he observes: 'The intolerance of almost all religions, which have maintained the unity of God, is as remarkable as the contrary principle of polytheists'.¹² Hume's remark has of course to be read against the background of the Enlightenment and his own critique of Christianity, and it is not surprising that his argument was quickly accepted by his great admirer Edward Gibbon in the latter's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. Gibbon, who was a much better writer than Hume, noted in one of the famous chapters about the early Christians: 'as long as their adoration (viz. of the polytheists) was successively prostituted to a thousand deities, it was scarcely possible that their hearts could be susceptible of a very sincere or lively passion for any of them'.¹³ Friedrich Nietzsche, who was also a classicist and briefly professor of Greek in Basel, went even further and argued in his *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882: § 143): 'Im Polytheismus lag die Freigeisterei und Vielgeisterei des Menschen vorgebildet'.¹⁴ This is a rather curious statement, as in the nineteenth and most of the twentieth century the great technological advances and challenging ideas have originated in the West rather than in the areas of (formerly) polytheist religions.

There is another aspect to be taken into account. It is remarkable that all participants in the debate have limited themselves to the framework delimited by Assmann himself, that is, a concentration on ancient Egypt, ancient Israel and Christianity. This limited framework is perhaps understandable,

11 As, unfortunately, German is progressively losing importance as a scholarly language, it is a fortunate development that Assmann's books on monotheism are gradually becoming available in English: *Of God and Gods: Egypt, Israel, and the Rise of Monotheism* (Madison 2008) and *The Price of Monotheism* (Stanford 2010).

12 D. Hume, *A Dissertation on the Passions; The Natural History of Religion: a critical edition*, ed. T.L. Beauchamp (Oxford 2007), 61.

13 E. Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. D. Womersley, 3 vols (London 1995²) 1.498.

14 F. Nietzsche: *Idyllen aus Messina; Die fröhliche Wissenschaft; Nachgelassene Fragmente, Frühjahr 1881 bis Sommer 1882 = Kritische Gesamtausgabe V.2*, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin 1973), 168–169.

given Assmann's Egyptological background and his marriage to Aleida Assmann, the daughter of the well-known German New Testament scholar Günter Bornkamm (1905–1990). Yet his thesis loses its force when we look beyond the ancient Mediterranean. The polytheist Japanese killed more than 50,000 Christians in the seventeenth century, the polytheist Chinese lost about 20 million people during the so-called Taiping rebellion in the middle of the nineteenth century, the polytheist Hindus murdered hundreds of thousands of Muslims during the partition of 1947 and have often continued doing so in the following years, and even in the twenty-first century we have witnessed the violence of the Buddhist Sinhalese of Sri Lanka against the Hindu and Christian Tamils of the island and of the Buddhist majority in Burma against the Muslim minority.¹⁵ Yet these numbers are dwarfed by the millions of victims of Nazism, fascism and communism in Germany, Eastern Europe, Russia, China and Cambodia. Anyone who looks beyond the borders of his or her own discipline cannot but conclude that polytheism is no less intolerant than monotheism, but will also realise that non-religious ideologies have been the cause of many more victims than religions of any persuasion.

However, for the theme of this book we need to take a more detailed look at antiquity. Were the polytheist religions of ancient Greece, the Hellenistic era and the Roman empire really that tolerant? From Athens we have the famous case of Socrates, of whom we know the official charge that led to his death: 'Socrates does wrong by not acknowledging the gods the city acknowledges, and introducing other new powers (*daimonia*). He also does wrong by corrupting the young.'¹⁶ The charge well illustrates that polytheism need not be tolerant. On the contrary. Evidently, Socrates had offended traditional Athenian religious feelings. Admittedly, we should not say that Socrates had transgressed

15 See Bremner, 'Religious Violence', 71–73; M. Jerryson and M. Juergensmeyer (eds), *Buddhist Warfare* (Oxford 2010); *New York Times* 21 June 2013 (Burma).

16 For the charge, see Favorinus *apud* Diogenes Laertius II, 40, tr. Robert Parker (below); note also Xenophon, *Memorabilia* I, 1, 1; *Apologia* 10; Plato, *Apologia* 24b8–c1, *Eutyphron* 3b; Philodemus, *De Pietate* 1696–1697 Obbink; Justin Martyr, 1 *Apologia* 5; cf. J.N. Bremner, 'Peregrinus' Christian Career', in A. Hilhorst et al. (eds), *Flores Florentino. Dead Sea Scrolls and Other Early Jewish Studies in Honour of Florentino García Martínez* (Leiden 2007), 729–747 (734–735). For the charge and the trial, see R. Parker, *Athenian Religion* (Oxford 1996), 199–207; A. Rubel, *Stadt in Angst. Religion und Politik in Athen während des Peloponnesischen Krieges* (Darmstadt 2000), 342–363; P. Millett, 'The Trial of Socrates Revisited', *European Review of History* 12 (2005), 23–62; J. Ober, 'Socrates and Democratic Athens', in D. Morrison (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates* (Cambridge 2011), 138–178; H.S. Versnel, *Coping with the Gods* (Leiden 2011), 554–559.

Athenian 'religious orthodoxy', as that would introduce a Christian notion non-existent in ancient Athens, but it is clear that religious innovation within Athenian *polis* religion had clear limits. Precisely because there were no dogmas, no professional clergy and no holy books Greek polytheism was perhaps more conservative than Christianity and Islam where the text of their holy books always allows new interpretations, even though, of course, the faithful can reject innovative approaches. The early Christians had not failed to notice the example of Socrates: Justin Martyr already refers to this pagan 'martyr', and the philosopher Peregrinus associated Jesus with Socrates during his Christian period.¹⁷ Apparently, Socrates was not the only pagan philosopher to have run into religious trouble, but our sources are not as clear as we would like them to be.¹⁸ In any case, as the execution of several female religious innovators in the fourth century BC illustrates, polytheistic Athens was hardly an example of religious tolerance.¹⁹

Yet we need not stay in Athens to find further examples of Greek religious violence. For example, we can think of the measures taken by Antiochus IV that elicited the revolt of the Maccabaeans. In early Ptolemaic Egypt the Jews were already confronted with 'anti-Semitism' of polytheistic Egyptians, such as Manetho and others,²⁰ although a real pogrom by Greeks against Egyptian Jews occurred only in Roman times, in Alexandria in AD 38. This pogrom also demon-

17 For Socrates and the Christians, see most recently K. Döring, *Exemplum Socratis* (Wiesbaden 1979), 143–161; Th. Baumeister, "Anytus und Meletus können mich zwar töten, schaden jedoch können sie mir nicht". Platon, Apologie des Sokrates 30c/d bei Plutarch, Epiktet, Justin Martyr und Clemens Alexandrinus', in H.-D. Blume and F. Mann (eds), *Platonismus und Christentum* (Münster 1983), 58–63; E. Dassmann, 'Christus und Sokrates', *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 36 (1993), 33–45 (39); Bremmer, 'Peregrinus' Christian Career', 734–735; C. Moss, 'Nailing Down and Tying Up: Lessons in Intertextual Impossibility from the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*', *Vigiliae Christianae* 67 (2013) 117–136 (129–130: Polycarp and Socrates).

18 For philosophers such as Anaxagoras and Diagoras, see J.N. Bremmer, 'Atheism in Antiquity', in M. Martin (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Atheism* (Cambridge 2007), 11–26.

19 For these executions, see K. Trampedach, "'Gefährliche Frauen". Zu athenischen Asebieprozessen im 4. Jahrhundert v. Chr.', in R. Von den Hoff and S. Schmidt (eds), *Konstruktionen von Wirklichkeit* (Stuttgart 2001), 137–155; E. Eidinow, 'Patterns of Persecution: "Witchcraft" Trials in Classical Athens', *Past & Present* 208 (2010), 9–35.

20 For 'anti-Semitism' in antiquity, see P. Schaefer, *Judeophobia* (Cambridge Mass., London 1997); B. Bar-Kochva, *The Image of the Jews in Greek Literature. The Hellenistic Period* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 2010). For early 'anti-Semitism', see also J.N. Bremmer, 'Jews and Spartans: Abrahamic cousins?', in M. Goodman et al. (eds), *Abraham, the Nations, and the Hagarites* (Leiden 2010), 47–59.

strates that religious violence does not necessarily presuppose great differences between people. On the basis of our present knowledge it seems clear that Jews and Greeks were not two groups of people that stood diametrically against one another, but that many Alexandrian Jews had already become assimilated at an early stage of the Macedonian occupation of Egypt, as is also well illustrated by the project of the *Septuagint*.²¹ At the same time, this pogrom raises an important methodological question: should we consider these conflicts from a functionalistic or essentialist perspective? In other words, was there in the Alexandria of AD 38 something that caused the bloody conflict or was the simple fact that Jews were different from Greeks and Egyptians sufficient to explain the pogrom? From a chronological perspective it is important to note that before the coming of the Romans 'anti-Semitism' seems to have been typical of the original Egyptians, whereas after the arrival of the Romans it seems to have come more from the Greeks, as the situation was already not untroubled in the time immediately before 38AD.

As the Romans proceeded to organise Egypt in the same manner as they had done with other provinces, they also promoted the imperial cult. Whereas before their intervention the various groups in multi-cultural Ptolemaic Alexandria could worship their own divinities, the imperial cult became important as a factor for integration but also as a factor that could distinguish and separate insiders from outsiders. Naturally, the Jews could not participate in the imperial cult, and that may well have been the root of the trouble.²² In any case, the refusal to install statues of Caligula in the synagogues must have made the religious identity of the Jews much more manifest in relation to the rest of the population, and this development will have led in AD 38 to what Pieter van der Horst has called 'the first pogrom'.²³ At the same time, we should not fail to

21 See now T. Rajak, *Translation and Survival: the Greek Bible of the Ancient Jewish Diaspora* (Oxford 2012); S. Kreuzer (ed.), *Die Septuaginta—Entstehung, Sprache, Geschichte* (Tübingen 2012); T.M. Law, *When God Spoke Greek: the Septuagint and the Making of the Christian Bible* (New York 2013); R.G. Kratz and B. Neuschäfer (eds), *Die Göttinger Septuaginta: ein editorisches Jahrhundertprojekt* (Berlin 2013).

22 W. Ameling, 'Market-place' und Gewalt: Die Juden in Alexandrien 38 n. Chr., *Würzburger Jahrbücher* 27 (2003), 71–123; see also J. Collins, 'Anti-Semitism in Antiquity? The Case of Alexandria', in C. Bakhos (ed.), *Ancient Judaism in its Hellenistic Context* (Leiden 2005), 9–30; K. Bringmann, 'Isopoliteia in den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Juden und Griechen in Alexandria', *Chiron* 35 (2005), 7–21; P. Bilde, 'The Jews in Alexandria in 38–41 CE', *Hephaistos* 24 (2006), 257–267.

23 P.W. van der Horst, *Philo's Flaccus, The First Pogrom: Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Leiden 2003).

notice that we do not hear of pogroms elsewhere in Egypt. Evidently, it was the particular constellation of Alexandria with its sizable Jewish population that led to violence, not an intrinsic contrast between Greeks and Jews analogous to the way nowadays Christianity and Islam are regularly represented as two contrasting religions that seem to exist outside history.

The situation is rather different in Rome. According to John Scheid, who, together with Jörg Rüpke, is perhaps the best known expert of Roman religion today, the religious attitude of the Romans can be characterised as follows: 'polythéiste et non doctrinal, le système religieux des Romains était forcément tolérant à l'égard des pratiques religieuses privées',²⁴ and, he adds, the traditional religious system of the Greco-Roman cities did not know any 'orthodoxie religieuse, mais simplement une orthopraxie'.²⁵ Even if the term 'orthodoxy' is not a fortunate one, as I already noted above, it will be clear by now that his statement is demonstrably mistaken regarding the Greeks, at least in the case of Athens, but is it really true regarding Rome?

Scheid's idea of Rome in this respect is rather curious, as we know that the Romans were not tolerant at all regarding private religious practices, as the notorious Bacchanalia scandal of 186 BC illustrates only too well. When suppressing the Bacchanalia, the Roman authorities themselves, or the victims' families, executed about 6000 members of Bacchic groups.²⁶ Moreover, the relevant *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus* (*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* I², 2, 581) clearly prohibited the founding of religious associations and the performance of rituals in public or private without consultation of the authorities. The message is evident: there was no space for religious freedom in Republican Rome. The message was also crystal clear, as we no longer hear of a comparable Roman action before the first persecutions of the Christians, except for the destruction of altars for Egyptian gods on the Capitol and the tearing down of

24 This is not the place to discuss the origin and usage of the terms 'pagan' and 'polytheist'. For those interested, see now the excellent discussions of both terms in connection with antiquity by A. Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* (Oxford 2011), 14–32 and J. North, 'Pagans, Polytheists, and the Pendulum', in J. North and S. Price (eds), *The Religious History of the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews, and Christians* (Oxford 2011), 479–502 (2005¹).

25 J. Scheid, 'Les religions', in F. Jacques and J. Scheid (eds), *Rome et l'intégration de l'Empire: 44 av. J.-C.-260 ap. J.-C. I* (Paris 1990), 111–128 (126).

26 The authoritative study is J.-M. Paillier, *Bacchanalia, la répression de 186 av. J.-C. à Rome et en Italie. Vestiges, images, tradition* (Rome 1988); more recently, H. Cancik-Lindemaier, *Von Atheismus bis Zensur* (Würzburg 2006), 33–49; P. Pavón, 'Y ellas fueron el origen de este mal ... (Liv. 39.15.9). *Mulieres contra mores* en las Bacanales de Livio', *Habis* 39 (2008), 79–95.

private shrines for Isis and Sarapis in the middle of the last century BC.²⁷ Admittedly, in the first decades of the empire the Jews were expelled several times from Rome just like, probably, the worshippers of Isis and, almost certainly, the astrologers so that even Seneca (*Ep.* 108, 22) felt the pressure and dropped his vegetarianism.²⁸ Unfortunately, our information about these events is rather scarce, but the absence of any religious motivation seems unlikely. In any case, it is clear that Roman polytheism was not tolerant in the modern sense of the word and increasingly regularised religious life.²⁹ In fact, no pagan author would plead religious tolerance before the victory of Christianity.³⁰

3 Pagans against Christians

It is generally accepted that, regarding the persecution of Christians by the Roman government, we can observe a watershed at the time of emperor Decius. Naturally it is not my intention to return once again to those persecutions, which have been often studied. For our purpose, we will look at two aspects, namely: why did Decius issue this edict and, secondly, what did it mean for the religion of the Roman empire? Regarding both points James Rives's fine

27 E.M. Orlin, 'Octavian and Egyptian Cults: Redrawing the Boundaries of Romanness', *American Journal of Philology* 129 (2008), 231–253 (236–237).

28 For the Jews the evidence has been endlessly discussed: see, more recently, L.V. Rutgers, 'Roman Policy toward the Jews: Expulsions from the City of Rome during the First Century CE', in K.P. Donfried and P. Richardson (eds), *Judaism and Christianity in First-Century Rome* (Grand Rapids, Mich., Cambridge 1998) 93–116; E. Gruen, *Diaspora* (Cambridge, Mass., London 2002) 29–36, 38–41 and 'The Emperor Tiberius and the Jews', in Th. Hantos (ed.), *"Laurea internationalis": Festschrift für Jochen Bleicken zum 75. Geburtstag* (Stuttgart 2003), 298–312; B. van der Lans, 'The Politics of Exclusion: Expulsions of Jews and Others from Rome', in O. Lehtipuu (ed.), *Christians, Jews and Roman Power: Dealing with a Dominant Ideology and its Social Realm* (Amsterdam 2013), forthcoming. Isis and astrologers: B. Rochette, 'Tibère, les cultes étrangers et les astrologues (Suétone, Vie de Tibère, 36)', *Les Etudes Classiques* 69 (2001), 189–194; P. Ripat, 'Expelling Misconceptions: Astrologers at Rome', *Classical Philology* 106 (2011), 115–154.

29 As is well observed by D. Baudy, 'Prohibitions of Religion in Antiquity: Setting the Course of Europe's Religious History', in Ando and Rüpke, *Religion and Law in Classical and Christian Rome*, 100–114.

30 Ancient (in)tolerance has been much discussed. See most recently M. Marcos and R. Teja (eds), *Tolerancia e intolerancia religiosa en el Mediterráneo antiguo: temas y problemas* (Madrid 2008); G. Cecconi and Ch. Gabrielli (eds), *Politiche religiose nel mondo antico e tardo-antico. Poteri e indirezzi, forme del controllo, idee e prassi di tolleranza* (Bari 2011).

1999 article has become authoritative.³¹ However, it is perhaps possible to complement him on some details.

In the fall or early winter of 249 Decius issued an edict that all inhabitants of the empire had to offer to the gods, to eat from the sacrificial meat and to swear that they had always sacrificed. What was the purpose of this edict? Rives argues that we can not know whether the edict primarily had an anti-Christian character. To be sure, he does not consider this impossible, for the sacrifice to the gods had long been the central test for Christians in their processes. On the other hand, as he says, we cannot be certain that Decius' primary intention was to eradicate Christianity as it appears to have been the case with Diocletian and Galerius. It may well have been Decius' intention that 'everyone in the empire, Christians included, perform a full and traditional sacrifice', and Rives seems to follow this line in the rest of his article.³²

However, it hardly seems fruitful to keep the two sides of Decius' edict too far apart and to make a hard choice between the two options, as has recently been done by AnneMarie Luijendijk in a fine study of early Christianity in the Oxyrhynchus papyri (and much else) and by Kate Cooper in an incisive analysis of Roman legal minimalism. That does not really enlighten the historical situation, as we cannot recover the exact motivation of Decius; and indeed, Rives admits that the emperor's motives remain hard to identify with the little material at our disposal.³³ At this point he is much more cautious than Luijendijk who positively states that 'Decius wanted to get the traditional gods of the empire on his side' or than Cooper's conclusion that 'it would be entirely understandable if the Christian sources distorted the picture in favor of their own importance'.³⁴ In any case, the effect was clear: the Christians were the real victims. It seems not unreasonable, therefore, for the early Christians to think

31 J. Rives, 'The Decree of Decius and the Religion of Empire', *Journal of Roman Studies* 89 (1999), 135–154.

32 Rives, 'The Decree of Decius', 142 (quote); see, more recently, also R. Selinger, *The Mid-Third Century Persecutions of Decius and Valerian* (Frankfurt 2004²); B. Bleckmann, 'Zu den Motiven der Christenverfolgung des Decius', in K.-P. Johné (ed.), *Deleto paene imperio Romano: Transformationsprozesse des Römischen Reiches im 3. Jahrhundert und ihre Rezeption in der Neuzeit* (Stuttgart 2006), 37–56; A. Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord* (Cambridge Mass. 2008), 157–174; K. Pietzner, 'Die Christen', in K.-P. Johné (ed.), *Die Zeit der Soldatenkaiser*, 2 vols (Berlin 2008), 2.973–1007 (994–999); A. Brent, *Cyprian and Roman Carthage* (Cambridge 2010), 117–249.

33 Rives, 'The Decree of Decius', 151.

34 Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 158; K. Cooper, 'Christianity, Private Power, and the Law from Decius to Constantine: The Minimalist View', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 19 (2011), 327–343 (340).

that the edict was primarily addressed against them, however neutrally it may have been formulated.³⁵

It is interesting to note that Cyprian (*Ep.* 55, 2, 1) speaks of *thurificati*: Christians who had only offered incense. The martyrs' acts, too, show that the prosecuting authorities sometimes adopted a more accommodating attitude towards the Christians by not letting them bring animal sacrifice but only incense, which one can hardly eat. Apparently, much depended on the place and the people that had to supervise the sacrifices.³⁶ In fact, we can observe the more accommodating attitude constantly until the persecutions of Diocletian and Galerius.³⁷ Such an attitude was possible because the implementation of the edict had been assigned to the local authorities, who must have often known the people involved.³⁸ Moreover, not all Roman governors were bloodthirsty, as Tertullian (*Ad Scapulam* 3–5) already noted, and one way of trying to escape having to execute them was the offer by the authorities to the Christians to sacrifice for the emperor, as in the *Passio Perpetuae* where Hilarianus asked Perpetua to sacrifice *pro salute imperatorum* (6, 4), although the imperial cult was hardly a significant factor in the persecution;³⁹ even the term 'imperial cult' suggests a kind of uniformity which in reality did not exist in the religiously heterogeneous Roman empire.⁴⁰ Evidently, the 'religious violence' of the Roman authorities was not uniform and could vary from place to place.

35 D.G. Martinez, 'The Papyri and Early Christianity', in R.S. Bagnall (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Papyrology* (Oxford 2009), 590–622 (605–606).

36 See also G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy* (Oxford 2006), 75–76.

37 See the examples in J. den Boeft and J. Bremmer, 'Notiunculae Martyrologicae', *Vigiliae Christianae* 35 (1981), 43–56 (47–49); add *Passio Felicis* 18: *recogita tecum*; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* VII, 15, 3–5.

38 Rives, 'The Decree of Decius', 152.

39 For persecutions, the imperial cult and the obligation to sacrifice to the gods, see F. Millar, *Rome, the Greek World and the East II* (Chapel Hill, London 2004), 298–312 (1973¹); A.R. Birley, 'Die "freiwilligen" Märtyrer. Zum problem der Selbst-Auslieferer', in R. von Haehling (ed.), *Rom und das himmlische Jerusalem* (Darmstadt 2000), 97–123 (103, 121–123): a useful list of passages with sacrifices to the gods and/or emperors; add *Acta Phileae*, rec. graeca 1 Pietersma (gods); P. van Minnen, 'The Earliest Account of a Martyrdom in Coptic', *Analecta Bollandiana* 113 (1995), 13–38 (30–31; a martyrdom of AD 305; gods); P. Canart and R. Pintaudi, 'Il martirio di san Pansofio', *Analecta Papyrologica* 16–17 (2004–2005 [2007]), 189–245 (198; purportedly under Decius: sacrifice to Jupiter).

40 As is stressed by W. Ameling, 'Der kleinasiatische Kaiserkult und die Öffentlichkeit', in M. Ebner and E. Esch-Ermeling (eds), *Kaiserkult, Wirtschaft und spectacula: zum politischen und gesellschaftlichen Umfeld der Offenbarung* (Göttingen 2011), 15–54.

A second point that Rives emphasizes is the change in the nature of religion. The obligation to sacrifice was no longer one of the collective but of the individual. That was relatively new but fits the religious development in the Roman empire, which, among other things, was characterized by detraditionalisation and individualisation.⁴¹ At the same time, it is important to note that the test is limited to a religious *act*. The inhabitants of the empire were not asked to *believe* anything, but to *do* something. The issue of the existence of faith in Antiquity receives increasing attention in recent times, but also in the edict of Valerian issued only a few years later it says: *eos qui Romanam religionem non colunt, debere Romanas caeremonias recognoscere* (*Acta Cypriani* 1).⁴² Even during the persecutions of Diocletian sacrifice remained the litmus test *par excellence*.⁴³ We are still dealing with orthopraxy not orthodoxy.

4 Christians against Pagans

Let us now turn from the violence of pagans against Christians to that of Christians against pagans.⁴⁴ If we are to believe Ramsay MacMullen, there was a considerable amount of violence, and the conversion of the empire was primarily due to the brutal actions of the Roman Christian government and the bishops, who, in the course of the fourth century, had increasingly won in power and influence.⁴⁵ It is interesting that, regarding this point, an increasing

41 J. Rüpkke, *Aberglauben oder Individualität* (Tübingen 2011), 147–152.

42 For Valerian's persecutions, see most recently Selinger, *The Mid-Third Century Persecutions of Decius and Valerian*, 83–95; Luijendijk, *Greetings in the Lord*, 174–188; L.H. Blumell, 'The Date of P.Oxy. XLIII 3119, the Deputy-Prefect Lucius Mussius Aemilianus, and the Persecution of Christians by Valerian and Gallienus', *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 186 (2013), 111–113.

43 For these much-discussed persecutions, see most recently W.A. Löhr, 'Some Observations on Karl-Heinz Schwarte's "Diokletian's Christengesetz"', *Vigiliae Christianae* 56 (2002), 75–95; De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, 35–78 (with useful additions by J. Streeter); A. Luijendijk, 'Papyri from the Great Persecution: Roman and Christian Perspectives', *Journal of Early Christian Studies* (2008), 341–369; V. Twomey (ed.), *The Great Persecution* (Dublin 2009); E. DePalmaDigeser, *A Threat to Public Piety: Christians, Platonists, and the great persecution* (Ithaca, London 2012).

44 K.L. Noethlichs, 'Heidenverfolgung', *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 13 (1986), 1149–1190 remains essential; note also P.F. Beatrice (ed.), *L'intolleranza cristiana nei confronti dei pagani* (Bologna 1990).

45 R. MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire: (A.D. 100–400)* (New Haven, London

turnaround can be witnessed in recent discussions of Christian violence in late antiquity, especially in two areas: the literary sources and the archaeological material. I will discuss two examples of the former and will make some more general observations on the latter.

One of the key witnesses to violent Christian contestations of paganism in Johannes Hahn's book *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt* is the *Life of Porphyry* by Mark the Deacon, which describes how bishop Porphyry ended the worship of Marnas, the chief god of Gaza in Palestine.⁴⁶ Worship of Marnas must have been important, because Jerome compares the Marneion of Gaza with the famous Serapaeum of Alexandria.⁴⁷ When Porphyry is appointed as bishop, he immediately shows that he is 'the right stuff' and stops a drought by a procession, even if he could not quite complete the procession (20). Nevertheless, 127 pagans get converted. After being bothered by the pagans, Porphyry procures an imperial letter from Constantinople that orders the temples to be closed (26), and the Marneion is the sole sanctuary that is secretly kept open by the corrupt official Hilarios. Porphyry returns to the capital where the emperor consents to close the temples but slowly and in moderation because the Gazans pay their taxes properly and well. Eventually he manages to get the required letter from the empress, who orders the notorious destroyer of pagan temples Cynegius to bring the closure of the temples to a successful conclusion (51). Cynegius succeeds in his task,⁴⁸ except with the Marneion. Only when a seven year old boy exclaims in Syriac that human sacrifice has been practised all too long and exactly indicates by what means the holy adyton of the temple can

1984), 86–101 and *Christianity and Paganism in the Fourth to Eighth Centuries* (New Haven, London 1997), 1–31.

46 For an excellent discussion and bibliography of the *Life*, see T. Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography and Early History* (Tübingen 2010), 260–283.

47 Hieronymus *Ep.* 107 and *In Esaiam* VI, 17, 2–3.

48 For Cynegius, see most recently H.-U. Wiemer, 'Die Rangstellung des Sophisten Libanios unter den Kaisern Julian, Valens und Theodosius: mit einem Anhang über Abfassung und Verbreitung von Libanios' Rede Für die Tempel (Or. 30)', *Chiron* 25 (1995), 89–130; L. García Moreno, 'Materno Cinegio: un noble hispano o un burocrata oriental?', in J.-M. Carrié and R. Lizzi Testa (eds), *"Humana sapit": études d'antiquité tardive offertes à Lellia Cracco Ruggini* (Turnhout 2002), 179–186; Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 79–83; H.-U. Wiemer, 'Für die Tempel? Die Gewalt gegen heidnische Heiligtümer aus der Sicht städtischer Eliten des spätrömischen Osten', in Hahn, *Staat und religiöser Konflikt*, 159–185 (166–167); more sceptical, N. McLynn, 'Genere Hispanus: Theodosius, Spain and Nicene Orthodoxy', in K. Bowes and M. Kulikowski (eds), *Hispania in Late Antiquity: current perspectives* (Leiden 2005), 77–120 (111–119), reprinted as Chapter III in McLynn, *Christian Politics and Religious Culture in Late Antiquity*.

be best burned down do the Christians succeed in destroying the interior of the sanctuary by fire. The outer wall, however, remains standing as a foundation for a basilica. The task was completed by raids in which pagan images were destroyed or burnt, just like books with magic (71).⁴⁹ Subsequently, some 300 pagans converted, which is perhaps a somewhat poor harvest after such an impressive destruction.⁵⁰

In his otherwise excellent discussion of the sources Hahn devotes 20 pages to this event, but nowhere notes that the French Protestant David Blondel (1591–1655) had already contested the historical reliability of this report in 1641.⁵¹ Preceded and followed by Alan Cameron,⁵² Tim Barnes (note 46) has firmly repeated that refutation and conclusively shown that the biography was actually written in the sixth century under Justinian. As is his custom, Barnes focuses on names, functions and data that are incongruous and anachronistic. A more distanced look at the role of the seven-year old boy, however, should already have shown that the biography contains motifs that do not fit a historically reliable report. Of course, this does not exclude Christian violence in Gaza, but the *Life of Porphyry* is no proof for such behaviour.

Now from Gaza to Gaul! Sulpicius Severus' *Life of Martin of Tours*, our Groningen saint *par excellence*, relates a series of cases where Martin (AD 316–397) destroyed pagan statues, temples and shrines. The striking aspect of this devastation is the fact that the pagans offer so little resistance, and we will come back to this phenomenon at the end of the next paragraph. In itself this passivity is perhaps not that strange, as Martin, when necessary, can 'freeze', as it were, a pagan ritual in progress (12). And if he cannot handle the situation himself, angels fly down with spears and shields in order to teach the pagans a lesson

49 The burning of books with magic becomes a kind of *topos* in later hagiographical literature, cf. D. Sarefield, 'Bookburning in the Christian Roman Empire: Transforming a Pagan Rite of Purification', in Drake (ed.), *Violence in Late Antiquity*, 287–296 and 'The Symbolics of Book Burning: The Establishment of a Christian Ritual of Persecution', in W. Klingshirn and L. Safran (eds), *The Early Christian Book* (Washington DC, 2007), 159–173; J. Herrin, 'Book Burning as Purification', in Ph. Rousseau and M. Papoutsakis (eds), *Transformations of Late Antiquity* (Farnham 2009), 205–222.

50 But see also J.H.F. Dijkstra, *Philae and the End of Ancient Egyptian Religion: a regional study of religious transformation (298–642 CE)* (Leuven 2008), 266.

51 Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 202–222, cf. D. Blondel, *De la primauté dans l'église* (Geneva 1641), 552. Note that Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 262 wrongly calls Blondel's first name Daniel.

52 A. Cameron, 'Earthquake 400', *Chiron* 17 (1987), 343–360 (355 note 60) and *Last Pagans*, 788–789.

(14, 4). However, here too, Barnes has something to teach us. Whenever we can check the data on Sulpicius Severus, something, be it a date or a name, will not fit, and Barnes therefore concludes that the *Life of Martin* is a *Fälschung*.⁵³ Admittedly, one can argue with this view and wonder whether an author could present an entirely fictional biography to his contemporaries when the protagonist was still alive or had only recently died. And is it really realistic to measure ancient historiography with our modernist standards of historical accuracy? In all cases, however, it should be noticed that Sulpicius Severus' Martin directs his violence against buildings and artifacts rather than people. Such behaviour matches the spirit of the later fourth century AD in which animal sacrifices already seem to have become, more or less, a matter of the past.⁵⁴ With the disappearance of sacrifice the core of the pagan religion was gone, and with it violence against pagans may have hardly been sensible.

Perhaps, even the pagans themselves could no longer be mobilized against the destruction of their religious buildings. Indeed, several historians have commented upon the passivity of the pagans in the face of Christian destruction,⁵⁵ or, put into more positive terms, noted the seemingly quiet atmosphere in which the transition from paganism to Christianity took place.⁵⁶ There certainly must have also been exceptions, and David Frankfurter has recently tried to explain a rather obscure reference to popular violence in a sermon by the Egyptian Abbot Besa at the end of the fifth century as a case comparable with that of iconoclastic behaviour of the Lele in Zaire (Congo) in the 1980s.⁵⁷ Now apart from the fact that the reference can be, and perhaps should

53 Barnes, *Early Christian Hagiography*, 199–234.

54 Cameron, *Last Pagans*, 59–74. For the exception, Julian the Apostate, see S. Bradbury, 'Julian's Pagan Revival and the Decline of Blood Sacrifice', *Phoenix* 49 (1995), 331–356; N. Belayche, 'Sacrifice and Theory of Sacrifice during the 'Pagan Reaction': Julian the Emperor', in A.I. Baumgarten (ed.), *Sacrifice in Religious Experience* (Leiden 2003), 101–126.

55 D. Frankfurter, "'Things Unbefitting Christians': Violence and Christianization in Fifth-Century Panopolis", *Journal of Early Christian Studies* 8 (2000), 273–295; M.R. Salzman, 'Rethinking Pagan—Christian Violence', in Drake (ed.), *Violence in Late Antiquity*, 265–286; Wiemer, 'Für die Tempel?', 171–172.

56 G.W. Bowersock, *Selected Papers on Late Antiquity* (Bari, 2000), 134–147, 159–172; P. Brown, 'Conversion and Christianization in Late Antiquity: The Case of Augustine', in C. Straw and R. Lim (eds), *The Past Before Us: The Challenge of Historiographies of Late Antiquity* (Turnhout 2004), 103–117; Wiemer, 'Für die Tempel?', 161.

57 Frankfurter, "'Things Unbefitting Christians'" and 'Comparison and the Study of Religions in Late Antiquity', in C. Calame and B. Lincoln (eds), *Comparer en histoire des religions antiques* (Liège 2012), 82–98 (95–97); without responding to the critique of Alan Cameron (next note).

be, explained differently,⁵⁸ it seems odd to compare an event in late antique Egypt, where Christianity had already been present for several centuries, to a region in Zaire where we have a completely different situation and history. Undoubtedly, pagans sometimes resisted Christian destructions of their statues and temples,⁵⁹ but the cases are few and far between, and we cannot be even that sure of authentic religious motives. In the end, late antique paganism no longer seems to have been something people wanted to die for.

Just as historians have become more critical regarding the literary sources for Christian violence, so we can notice the same development concerning archaeological sources. In an article of 1939 that has remained authoritative until quite recently, the German archaeologist and Byzantinist Friedrich Deichmann (1909–1993) enumerated 89 cases of temple destruction in late antiquity.⁶⁰ Most of them were based on literary sources, such as the work of the abbot Shenoute of Atripe,⁶¹ and it is important to realize that descriptions of temple destructions in Egypt in hagiographical sources, especially, do not occur before the fifth century. However, when we look not only at the archaeological evidence but also at the epigraphical sources, we can see that, at a fairly early

58 A. Cameron, 'Poets and Pagans in Byzantine Egypt', in R.S. Bagnall (ed.), *Egypt in the Byzantine World, 300–700* (Cambridge 2007), 21–46 (39–44), who on p. 43 also notes as 'one of the more distracting features' of Frankfurter his tendency to compare Late Antique Egypt with twentieth-century Africa; for similar objections, see J. van der Vliet, 'Bringing Home the Homeless: Landscape and History in Egyptian Hagiography' and P. van Minnen, 'Saving History? Egyptian Hagiography in Its Space and Time', in J.H.F. Dijkstra and M. van Dijk (eds), *The Encroaching Desert: Egyptian Hagiography and the Medieval West* (Leiden 2006), 39–55 and 57–91, respectively; R.S. Bagnall, 'Models and Evidence in the Study of Religion in Late Roman Egypt', in Hahn, *From Temple to Church*, 23–41 (36–37).

59 See the cases discussed by Salzman, 'Rethinking Pagan—Christian Violence'; J.M. Blázquez Martínez, 'La violencia religiosa en la *Historia Eclesiástica* de Teodoro de Cirro. Violencia contra los paganos. Violencia de unos cristianos contra otros', *Gerión* 28 (2010), 330–390; Cameron, *Last Pagans*, 797–901.

60 F. Deichmann, 'Frühchristliche Kirchen in antiken Heiligtümern', *Jahrbuch des deutschen archäologischen Instituts* 54 (1939), 105–136, reprinted with additions in idem, *Rom, Ravenna, Konstantinopel, Naher Osten. Gesammelte Studien zur spätantiken Architektur, Kunst und Geschichte* (Wiesbaden 1982), 56–94.

61 However, St. Emmel, 'Shenoute of Atripe and the Christian destruction of temples in Egypt: rhetoric and reality', in Hahn, *From Temple to Church*, 161–201 (165–166) has shown that there remains only one secure case of a temple destruction in which Shenoute was involved; see also A.G. López, *Shenoute of Atripe and the Uses of Poverty: rural patronage, religious conflict and monasticism in late antique Egypt* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 2013), 102–126.

moment already, in Egypt people no longer visited the temples, as the graffiti of visitors already stopped in many temples in the mid-fourth century, if not even earlier. Also in cases where papyri were found in temples, such as at Kellis, we can observe that the temples stopped being visited in the course of the fourth century, and papyri show that the temple of Hadrian in Oxyrhynchus was already in use as a prison in the fourth century. Even if churches were built inside temples—and the title of a recent collection on our theme, *From Temple to Church*, suggests that it was relatively normal—they were buildings inside the temple, not in place of the temple, as we can well see at Karnak and Medinet Habu.⁶² Although we cannot exclude cases of temple destruction, our evidence increasingly suggests that these were exceptions. The picture of zealous monks and fanatical bishops has proven attractive to many historians and archaeologists, but just as the evidence for persecution of Christians under the Romans has sometimes been exaggerated, so too we should note the dearth of evidence for Christians destroying temples.⁶³

5 Christians against Jews

I want to conclude my analysis of violence between different religious groups with some remarks about the relationship between Jews and Christians. Although we hear of tensions in some cities in the first centuries, as in the martyrdoms of Polycarp and Pionius in Smyrna, a city with a large Jewish community,⁶⁴ we hear of more severe collisions between Jews and Christians only with some regularity in the fourth century, fuelled, presumably, by the often outrageous rhetoric of Christian clergy.⁶⁵ Even though, of course, any instance of violence is regrettable, the most recent investigation of Judeo-Christian ten-

62 Cf. J.H.F. Dijkstra, 'The Fate of the Temples in Late Antique Egypt', in Lavan and Mulryan, *The Archaeology of Late Antique Paganism*, 389–436, with examples and important methodological considerations; in fact, several studies in *The Archaeology of Late Antique Paganism* arrive at the same conclusion as Dijkstra.

63 For an excellent review of the limits of archaeology as a source for our knowledge of temple destruction, see B. Ward-Perkins, 'The End of the Temples: An Archaeological Problem', in Hahn, *Staat und religiöser Konflikt*, 187–199.

64 W. Ameling, 'The Christian lapsi in Smyrna, A.D. 250 (Martyrium Pionii 12–14)', *Vigiliae Christianae* 62 (2008), 133–160.

65 R. González Salinero, 'Retórica y violencia contra los judíos en el Imperio cristiano (siglos IV y V)', *Sacris Erudiri* 45 (2006), 125–157; Rutgers, *Making Myths*, 79–115; Cameron, *Last Pagans*, 209–211.

sions in late antiquity, that by the Bonn church historian Wolfram Kinzig, is able to produce only 14 certain notices and 6 uncertain ones for the entire Roman empire in the period of 350–600 AD. The majority of these notices derives from the East,⁶⁶ as they do for clashes between Christians and pagans. Within the East the majority of these collisions took place in the major cities Alexandria and Antioch, both of which contained a significant Jewish population.⁶⁷

Yet even here the sources are sometimes less clear than we would wish. I like to illustrate this observation with the problem of the tombs of the Maccabean martyrs in Antioch. The traditional view is that during the fourth century the church took over the tombs of the Maccabees from a Jewish synagogue.⁶⁸ The first problem with this position is that there is no evidence for this. Indeed, our compatriot Leonard Rutgers has emphasized that the presence of a grave in a synagogue in late antiquity was unthinkable and became popular only in the middle ages and under Christian influence; moreover, there is no other evidence for a pilgrimage to graves of Jews at this time.⁶⁹ This absence of evidence does not mean that we should rule out altogether the statement of the local sixth-century historian Malalas (8, 23–24) that the tomb originally stood in Kerateon, the Jewish quarter of Antioch. In itself, a grave there could be imagined. More importantly, however, the idea that Christians took over a Jewish site of worship ignores the fact that the Maccabees were not very popular among late antique Jews, but owe their current popularity entirely to the preserva-

66 For the relations in the West, see now, with an excellent bibliography, R. Barcellona, 'Ebrei e cristiani così vicini così lontani. Alcuni aspetti della normativa anti giudaica occidentale nella tardo-antichità', in G. Sfameni Gasparro et al. (eds), *Religion in the History of European Culture* (Palermo 2013), 214–256.

67 W. Kinzig, 'Juden und Christen in der Antike. Trennungen, Transformationen, Kontinuitäten und Annäherungen', in R. Hvalvik and J. Kaufman (eds), *Among Jews, Gentiles and Christians in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Studies in Honour of Professor Oskar Skarsaune on his 65th Birthday* (Trondheim 2011), 129–156.

68 See especially Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt*, 180–185, expanded in his 'The Veneration of the Maccabean Brothers in Fourth Century Antioch: Religious Competition, Martyrdom, and Innovation', in G. Signori (ed.), *Dying for the Faith, Killing for the Faith* (Leiden 2012), 79–104, where, unfortunately, he explicitly refuses to engage with Rutgers' counter arguments (p. 86 note 19). For the synagogue, see now L. Triebel, 'Die angebliche Synagoge der makabäischen Märtyrer in Antiochia am Orontes', *Zeitschrift für Antike und Christentum* 9 (2006), 464–495.

69 L.V. Rutgers, *Making Myths* (Leuven 2009), 35–37 (first published in 1998), whose argument is also accepted by Hahn, *Gewalt*, 183–184. Note, however, that Rutgers' stress on Christian violence against Jews is not supported by Kinzig's careful discussion of the known cases.

tion of their books by the Christians.⁷⁰ We must also remember that, as Ton Hilhorst has shown in a fine study,⁷¹ albeit neglected in discussions of Antioch, that it was not *IIMaccabees* but *IVMaccabees*, which had been already translated into Latin in the fourth century,⁷² that impressed the Christian tradition. The interest of the early church in the courageous attitude of the Jewish martyrs sufficiently explains why the Antiochene church built a basilica in their honour. We need not assume that this process necessarily involved violence against the Jewish community. The fact that many synagogues were constructed in this period demonstrates that the Jewish communities were able to flourish in late antiquity.⁷³ Jewish-Christian relations, while hardly ideal, were far from the horrors of the middle ages and modern times, even though it would not be long before synagogues would be turned into churches by force.⁷⁴

6 Conclusion

To vary once again Huizinga, in this case the famous opening sentence of his *In the Shadows of Tomorrow*, we live in times of violence, and we know that. Our newspapers are full of it, but they rarely speak about nonviolent coexistence. For most of us, though, life is relatively peaceful, as we can all observe in our daily lives. The concentration on religious violence makes it difficult to get a proper picture of ancient religious relations at the local level. Usually, we only hear something in particular cases or by chance, because research on religious violence was not part of antiquity. Candida Moss has recently published a book with the provocative title *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom*.⁷⁵ One need not immediately have to accept the whole of her argument in order to see that the persecutions of Christians, Jews

⁷⁰ Rutgers, *Making Myths*, 32–34.

⁷¹ A. Hilhorst, 'Fourth Maccabees in Christian Martyrdom Texts', in C. Kroon and D. den Hengst (eds), *Ultima Aetas. Time, Tense and Transience in the Ancient World: Studies in Honour of Jan den Boeft* (Amsterdam 2000), 107–121.

⁷² H. Dörrie, *Passio SS. Machabeorum, die antike lateinische Übersetzung des IV. Makkabäerbuches* (Göttingen 1938).

⁷³ Rutgers, *Making Myths*, 80.

⁷⁴ P. Dilley, 'Christian icon practice in apocryphal literature: consecration and the conversion of synagogues into churches', *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 23 (2010), 285–302.

⁷⁵ C. Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (New York 2013).

and pagans are indeed sites of contestation, where both ancient propagandists and modern scholars have been rather keen in shaping and interpreting history according to their own views. In my contribution I have tried to show the problems associated with the term religious violence and the recent attempts to make especially monotheism responsible for that violence. I have argued that this thesis is not supported by the ancient evidence. On the contrary, it is Roman polytheist religion that is the inventor of the phenomenon of systematic religious persecution. That prosecution, however, focused primarily on practices not on beliefs, on orthopraxy not orthodoxy. This attitude continued to exist well after Constantine, and the religious actions of the first Christian emperors were directed at practices like magic and divination rather than against pagan or Jewish beliefs.

As regards the persecution of the Christians by the pagans, I have argued that the pagans certainly were less bloodthirsty than our modern movies and novels suggest. Even though the fact of persecutions does not seem in doubt, at an early stage Christians started to collect and to adapt reports of their martyrs and, increasingly, to fabricate them. To separate fact from fiction is not always easy in those cases, and Candida Moss' recent critique of the historicity of the commonly accepted martyr acts deserves sometimes acceptance but also further discussion.⁷⁶

As regards the attitude of Christians towards pagans, we have seen that modern scholarship has become much more critical in its analysis of the literary sources as well as in the evaluations of the archaeological evidence. Yet the temptation to see in the ancient Christian monks equivalents of modern Islamic fundamentalists remains attractive, as the recent movie *Agora* (2009) on the murder of Hypatia well illustrates.⁷⁷ Contrary to recent scholarship, there is much less archaeological evidence for temple conversion than is suggested by pagan authors like Libanius.⁷⁸ To bring the literary evidence with its

76 See her, sometimes perhaps too sceptical, discussions in C. Moss, *Ancient Christian Martyrdom: diverse practices, theologies, and traditions* (New Haven and London 2012), 'The Discourse of Voluntary Martyrdom: Ancient and Modern', *Church History* 81 (2012), 531–551, 'Nailing Down and Tying Up' (note 17) and *The Myth of Persecution*.

77 For a different picture, see M. Wallraff, 'Rabiate Diener Gottes? Das spätantike Mönchtum und seine Rolle bei der Zurückdrängung paganer Kulte', in H.-G. Nesselrath et al., *Für Religionsfreiheit, Recht und Toleranz. Libanios' Rede für den Erhalt der heidnischen Tempel* (Tübingen 2011), 159–177; Cameron, *Last Pagans*, 211–213.

78 As noted by K.S. Freyberger, 'Zur Nachnutzung heidnischer Heiligtümer aus Nord- und Südsyrien in spätantiker Zeit', in Nesselrath, *Für Religionsfreiheit, Recht und Toleranz*, 179–226 (201).

regularly rhetorical character and the often incomplete and difficult to interpret archaeological material closer together is an urgent task for the coming years.

Finally, regarding the Christian attitude towards the Jews, we have noted that relations in the period under review were certainly far from ideal in the light of modern standards but infinitely less terrible than what we have witnessed in medieval and later times. Why that was the case again asks for an explanation, but that would require a different article. In any case, it is clear that in the course of antiquity, from the Athens of Socrates to the Roman empire of Theodosius I, the authorities gradually but increasingly regularised religious life. This process went concomitant with various coercive measures, sometimes harsh, sometimes benevolent, but never liberal in our sense. It is an awkward heritage that still rests heavily on modern life and politics.⁷⁹

79 For their insightful comments and critiques I am most grateful to Jitse Dijkstra, to Candida Moss, who also skilfully corrected my English, and to the editors of this volume.

Violence against Christians and Violence by Christians in the First Three Centuries: Direct Violence, Cultural Violence and the Debate about Christian Exclusiveness

Danny Praet

Christianity was defined by violence during its forming years: it started as a reaction to the violent death of Jesus of Nazareth,¹ and his followers, at least in their own self-understanding and self-presentation, were constantly persecuted by either Jews or pagans during the next three centuries. The historical truth of these constant persecutions has been questioned by modern research,²

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- 1 The cognitive dissonance between the expectations of the Jesus followers and his violent death resulted in the belief in the resurrection and the message of a suffering Messiah who would return for the final judgment. See John G. Gager, 'The End of Time and the Rise of Community', in Idem, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ 1975), 19–65. Reprinted in David G. Horrell (ed.), *Social-Scientific Approaches to New Testament Interpretation* (Edinburgh 1999): 'Christian missions and the theory of cognitive dissonance', 177–194 with a critical introduction on the reception of this theory and references for further reading.
 - 2 See already Voltaire in 1763, *Traité sur la tolérance* (Paris 1989), 72: 'Il est difficile d'accorder cette fureur de persécution avec la liberté qu'eurent les chrétiens d'assembler cinquante-six conciles que les écrivains ecclésiastiques comptent dans les trois premiers siècles.' We name but a few modern studies: W.H.C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church* (Oxford 1965), Pierre Maraval, *Les persécutions durant les quatre premiers siècles du christianisme* (Doornik & Paris 1992); Marie-Françoise Baslez, *Les persécutions dans l'Antiquité: victimes, héros, martyrs* (Paris 2007). See also the overviews in multivolume histories of Christianity such as Margaret M. Mitchell and Frances M. Young (eds), *The Cambridge History of Christianity*. Vol. 1: *Origins to Constantine* (Cambridge 2006); W.H.C. Frend, 'Persecutions: Genesis and Legacy', 503–523 and Adolf Martin Ritter, 'Church and State up to c. 300 CE', 524–553; or Henry Chadwick, *The Church in Ancient Society: From Galilee to Gregory the Great* (*The Oxford History of the Christian Church* 1; Oxford 2001), 21–27, 114–118, 176–189; Claude Lepelley, 'Les chrétiens et l'Empire romain', in Jean-Marie Mayeur et al. (eds), *Histoire du christianisme 1: Le nouveau peuple (des origines à 250)* (Paris 2000), 227–266 and Luce Pietri, 'Les résistances: de la polémique païenne à la persécution de Dioclétien', in Vol. 2: *Naissance d'une chrétienté (250–430)* (Paris 1995), 155–185.

and researchers have wondered how and when a movement defined as the victim of violence in the first three centuries transformed, in the fourth century, into a religion which motivated violent perpetrators.³ Many answers have been offered. On one side of the spectrum we could put the thesis that Christianity has always been or is inherently violent and intolerant: that it was just waiting for the chance to eliminate other traditions.⁴ On the other side we find the thesis that Christian violence has been exaggerated and what little violence there was should actually be seen as self-defense.⁵ Christians were so traumatized by the persecutions in the first centuries and the prospect of another persecution under the emperor Julian that they wanted to avoid ever being persecuted again: preemptive self-defense to use a debated term from modern international law. We would like to offer some reflections on these themes but before we start, it is perhaps best to contextualize the discussion, to try and avoid the stereotypes we used in the previous lines, by offering a few preliminary remarks.

1 Preliminary Remarks

Instead of narrowing down the discussion to actual, direct or real violence, we would like to expand the definition of violence to include certain types of

3 Many studies concentrate on (in-)tolerance and violence from the fourth century onwards, which is beyond the scope of this article but will no doubt be used in other contributions in this volume, but we would like to mention a few like Hal Drake, 'Lambs into Lions: Explaining Early Christian Intolerance', *Past and Present* 153 (1996), 3–36 or the 'Shifting Frontiers' volume: Hal Drake (ed.), *Violence in Late Antiquity: Perceptions and Practices* (London 2006); Michael Gaddis, *There is no Crime for those who have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Berkeley 2005), with only the introduction and the first chapter ('Persecution and martyrdom from Diocletian to Constantine', 29–67) which are relevant for the first three centuries.

4 Mark Edwards, 'Severan Christianity', in Simon Swain, Stephen Harrison, and Jaś Elsner (eds), *Severan Culture* (Cambridge 2007), 401–418, 418: 'Gibbon insinuates that the zealous Christian is a persecutor masquerading as one of the persecuted.' More recent and somewhat less subtle is K. Deschner cf. *infra*.

5 T.C.G. Thornton, 'The Destruction of Idols. Sinful or Meritorious?' *Journal of Theological Studies* 37 (1986), 121–129; Jeremy Johns, 'Christianity and Islam', in John McManners (ed.), *The Oxford History of Christianity* (Oxford & New York 2002), 201: 'It has been suggested that Christian exclusivity has its origins in the second and third century persecution of Christians and derives precisely from their pre-existing conviction that other always persecuted them.'

cultural violence (as defined by John Galtung⁶) which, although never direct or real, were arguably conducive to direct and to structural violence in the interreligious struggles of these and later centuries. This will lead us to discuss more than just the extent of direct violence by and against Christians. We would also include certain products of the imagination related to violence in the sense that they can be said to lead to direct violence.

In many cases religious violence, both direct and cultural, can be understood as or reduced to social, economic, political, ethnic or other tensions; some people have gone as far as to deny that any violence is 'really' religious (the religious violence myth).⁷ Others, especially in the wake of 9/11 and as part of the wave of 'new atheism' have argued that religion, especially in its monotheistic forms, has been and still is one of the most important triggers of violent behaviour.⁸ It is possible to write a ten volume *Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums*, as Karlheinz Deschner has done, and this project has been much criticized for being prejudiced and one-sided, whereas traditional multi-volume histories of Christianity or of the Church, which used to totally ignore the darker side of this history were not equally criticized.⁹ Related to this discussion is the

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- 6 Johan Galtung, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research* 6, 3 (1969), 167–191 and 'Cultural violence', *Journal of Peace Research* August 27, 3 (1990), 291–305, see 291: 'By "cultural violence" we mean those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence—exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logic, mathematics)—that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence.'
 - 7 William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence: Secular Ideology and the Roots of Modern Conflict* (New York & Oxford, 2009). See also idem, 'The Myth of Religious Violence', in Andrew R. Murphy (ed.) *The Blackwell Companion to Religion and Violence* (Oxford 2011), 23–33 and *ibidem* the refutation by Hector Avalos, 'Explaining Religious Violence: Retrospects and Prospects', 137–146, especially 143–144. The chapter 'Christianity and violence' by Jonathan Ebel (149–162) contains very little about our period.
 - 8 None of the works related to the 'new atheism' are written by historical scholars and some are even rather journalistic but they have been very influential: one can refer to the works of people like Sam Harris, *The End of Faith: Religion, Terror, and the Future of Reason* (New York 2004); Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London 2006), 268–287 on Old and New Testament; Christopher Hitchens, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything / The Case Against Religion* (New York 2007); and in the French world especially Michel Onfray, *Traité d'athéologie. Physique de la métaphysique* (Paris 2005), 187–237. In the Dutch language area, see Paul Cliteur, *Het monotheïstisch dilemma: theologie van het terrorisme* (Amsterdam & Antwerpen 2010).
 - 9 The tenth and final volume appeared in 2013. The volumes on Antiquity are: *Kriminalgeschichte des Christentums*. vol. 1 *Die Frühzeit* 2: *Die Spätantike* and Vol. 3: *Die Alte Kirche*:

debate whether polytheism is inherently tolerant and monotheism inherently intolerant.¹⁰ People who believe the former face serious problems explaining pagan violence against Christians. If one is convinced of the latter one can not ignore the irenic aspects of monotheistic faiths. The question has even been raised whether it is at all possible to use concepts such as 'toleration', 'tolerance' and 'intolerance' in debates about ancient religions, since they are inherently related to modern societies.¹¹

We would try to adopt a middle position in these debates. We believe that religious beliefs and texts have had an independent effect through the ages, often combined with social, economic and other influences, but also as an independent force since religion cannot be completely reduced to other areas of human endeavor, and this also applies to the question whether religion produced or intensified violence. And, although it is perfectly possible to contextualize or even ignore violent aspects of beliefs by stating specific violent acts had non-religious causes, and even though it is possible for believers and non-believers alike to ignore or allegorize violent passages in holy texts, it is impossible to understand the history of violence between Christians and non-Christians without pointing to violent aspects contained in the religious traditions themselves: aspects which, whatever the contextual reasons were

Fälschung, Verdummung, Ausbeutung, Vernichtung (Reinbeck bei Hamburg 1986, 1988, 1990). A volume with 24 critical contributions in 1993, second edition 1994 was edited by Hans Reinhard Seeliger (ed.), *Kriminalisierung des Christentums? Karlheinz Deschners Kirchengeschichte auf dem Prüfstand* (Freiburg, Basel, Wien 1994).

10 Regina Schwartz, *The Curse of Cain: The Violent Legacy of Monotheism* (Chicago 1997) actually focuses on Judaism. J. Harold Ellens (ed.), *The destructive power of religion: Violence in Christianity, Judaism and Islam* (Westport, CT 2004) has four volumes; or a one volume 'condensed and updated edition' (London & Westport, CT 2007). See also Jan Assmann, *Monotheismus und die Sprache der Gewalt* (Wien 2006); the exchange between J. Assmann and Eckart Reinmuth, 'Ist der eine Gott gewalttätig?' *Zeitschrift für Neues Testament* 9 (2006), 42–47 and 48–52; Arnold Angenendt, *Toleranz und Gewalt: das Christentum zwischen Bibel und Schwert* (Münster 2007).

11 See the references in the introduction by Joseph Streeter in M. Whitby and J. Streeter (eds), G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom and Orthodoxy* (Oxford 2006), 11–34 and the appendix 'Religious Toleration in Classical Antiquity and Early Christianity', 229–251. See also P. Garnsey, 'Religious toleration in Classical Antiquity' in the general volume W.J. Sheils (ed.), *Persecution and Toleration* (Studies in Church History 21; Oxford 1984), 1–29; Graham N. Stanton and Guy G. Stroumsa (eds), *Tolerance and intolerance in early Judaism and Christianity* (Cambridge 1998); Ingo Broer and Richard Schlüter (eds), *Christentum und Toleranz* (Darmstadt 1996); Polymnia Athanassiadi, *Vers la pensée unique: la montée de l'intolérance dans l'Antiquité tardive* (Paris 2010).

that produced them in the first place, develop an independent dynamic and produce new events.¹² As a last preliminary remark we should clarify that terms we will be using like ‘Christians’ and ‘non-Christians’, ‘pagans’, ‘Greeks’, ‘Romans’, ‘Jews’ are obviously too general and generalizing; we do not need to repeat the nominalism-realism debate to realize that every one of these terms is a construct to a certain extent. And even if they were not, discussing violence in a given tradition does not imply that tradition is inherently, always, or even most of the time violent. All traditions have different, both irenic and polemic, sides.¹³ Most people lived and live in relative religious harmony most of the time, but we will be focusing on aspects of violence between religious groups in antiquity, and a radical historical nominalism can lead to critical myopia, reducing everything to micro-analyses or even rejecting most cases as ‘rhetoric’. Our aim here is to reflect about which aspects of certain religious traditions could lead and have led to direct violence in specific cases and have had an effect which cannot be reduced to non-religious factors.

2 The Kitos-War as a Religious Conflict

We will start with an analysis of the Jewish revolts because a discussion of violence by and against Christians in the first centuries cannot ignore the close relationship between Judaism and Christianity in the eyes of many Romans. It is difficult to assess whether the conflict between Jews and Romans is part of the history of religious violence or should be seen as a struggle for political freedom, or both. Discussions of this conflict tend to focus on the great Jewish Revolt in Palestine between 66 and 73 CE, or on the Bar Kochba revolt of 132–135 CE and these easily correspond to a modern idea of national libera-

12 For violence in the New Testament see Martin Leutzsch, ‘Gewalt und Gewalterfahrung im Neuen Testament: ein vergessenes Thema der neutestamentlichen Wissenschaft?’ *Zeitschrift für Neues Testament* 9, 17 (2006) 2–13. See also Shelly Matthews and E. Leigh Gibson (eds), *Violence in the New Testament* (New York & London 2005); Luca Mazzinghi (ed.), *La violenza nella Bibbia* (Bologna 2008).

13 For a balanced view with very rich further references, see Marc Van Uytanghe, ‘Charité versus fanatisme dans quelques biographies spirituelles de l’Antiquité tardive. Première partie: introduction et vies monastiques tardives’, in Rosanna Barcellona and Teresa Sardella (eds), *Munera amicitiae: studi di storia e cultura sulla tarda antichità offerti a Salvatore Pricoco* (Soveria Mannelli 2003), 529–565, 529–536 for thoughts on charity and on fanaticism in the Bible and pre-Constantinian Christianity.

tion wars against foreign oppressors, but scholarship should perhaps give more attention to the conflict that chronologically came in between these two.¹⁴ In fact it must have been far more disturbing to the leaders of the Roman Empire because it threatened its cultural-religious model and was not confined to one specific (and rather small) region like Judea. The so-called Kitos-war (115–117 CE) was named after Lusius Quietus: one of the Roman commanders who subdued the revolt. The series of uprisings probably started in Mesopotamia with Jews attacking Roman soldiers while Trajan was campaigning against the Parthians. Violence also broke out in Cyrenaica, spreading to Egypt, Cyprus, Palestine and Syria. It seems possible that some of the Jewish leaders (e.g. Lucuas) were recognized by some as King or Messiah, as Bar Kochba later would be, and that eschatological hopes played a part in the violence. James J. Bloom wrote: ‘The causes are nowhere directly attributed, but it can reasonably be inferred that the Jews’ primary objective was to make war upon the gods of the pagans, uprooting their shrines and destroying the worshippers in the process. This conforms to a primary messianic motivation—that the Messiah had arrived in the form of Loukuas-Andreas and was sent by God to eradicate the sacrilege of the pagans dwelling among the Jews.’¹⁵ Dio Cassius (68, 32) gives a probably exaggerated account, but the conflict was major.

Meanwhile the Jews in the region of Cyrene had put one Andreas at their head and were destroying both the Romans and the Greeks. They would cook their flesh, make belts for themselves of their entrails, anoint themselves with their blood, and wear their skins for clothing. Many they sawed in two, from the head downwards. Others they would give to wild beasts and force still others to fight as gladiators. In all, consequently, two hundred and twenty thousand perished. In Egypt, also, they performed many similar deeds, and in Cyprus under the leadership of Artemio. There, likewise, two hundred and forty thousand perished. For this reason no Jew may set foot in that land, but even if one of them is driven upon

14 See both the Italian book by Marina Pucci, *La rivolta ebraica al tempo di Traiano* (Pisa 1981) and her more recent study under the name Miriam Pucci Ben Zeev, *Diaspora Judaism in Turmoil, 116/117 CE: Ancient Sources and Modern Insights* (Interdisciplinary Studies in Ancient Culture and Religion 6; Leuven & Dudley, Mass. 2005); eadem, ‘The uprisings in the Jewish Diaspora’, in W.D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein (eds), *The Cambridge History of Judaism 4: The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period* (Cambridge 2006), 93–104.

15 James J. Bloom, *The Jewish Revolts Against Rome, A.D. 66–135: A Military Analysis*. (Jefferson, N.C. 2010), 193.

the island by force of the wind, he is put to death. Various persons took part in subduing these Jews, one being Lusius, who was sent by Trajan.¹⁶

Even if the gruesome details and the numbers given by Dio are exaggerated, this revolt of an ethnic and a religious group living in Diaspora in different regions of the Empire attacking not only soldiers or officials but clearly also their fellow citizens and destroying their temples was not a territorial conflict as the first and the third Jewish revolts could be called in modern terms, but an ethnic or a religious conflict. The attacks against the 'Gentiles' were directed, not just against temples of the imperial cult, but against temples of various divinities: in Cyrene e.g. the temples of Zeus but also of Apollo, Artemis, Demeter and Isis were damaged. Whatever the causes, clearly the violence ran along religious lines and was directed against places of worship. Martin Goodman refers to a Huntingtonian 'clash of civilizations' in his title,¹⁷ but links this specific regional revolt to frustration about the Jewish tax, which was perhaps abolished by Nerva (96–98 CE) only to be reinstated by Trajan. Goodman stresses that the tax had to be paid by Jews all over the Empire although they had never supported the Revolt in the 60s and calls the tax 'a malicious slur on the loyalty to Rome of the whole Jewish people'. One can wonder whether the violence was quite in proportion to this slur and to paying two denarii.

3 Violent Destruction of Paganism in the Jewish-Christian Imagination

Real violence had its counterpart in the Judaeo-Christian religious literature, as we would like to illustrate with a few examples. The redaction and transmission of the so-called 'intertestamentary' literature is very complex since most of the books were written by Jews but rewritten or edited by Christians. It is also almost impossible to say whether pagan intellectuals knew these books and had perhaps read them: anti-Christian critics like Celsus and Porphyry had read parts of what would later be known as the canonical books of the Old and the New Testament,¹⁸ but the most violent passages directed against pagans can

16 Translation by Earnest Cary and Herbert Baldwin Foster in LCL 8, 420–423.

17 M. Goodman, *Rome and Jerusalem: The Clash of Ancient Civilizations* (London 2007), 'Reactions 70–312', 445–511 (469).

18 Stephen Benko, 'Pagan Criticism of Christianity during the first two centuries A.D.', *ANRW* II, 23, 2 (1980), 1055–1118; Anthony Meredith, 'Porphyry and Julian against the Christians', *ANRW* II, 23.2 (1980), 1019–1049.

be found in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. It is impossible to say whether the negative attitude towards Jews and Christians could have been caused by the not so positive things pagans could read in the Jewish-Christian literature, but it does give us an idea of the violent fantasies some people entertained about destroying the infrastructure of polytheism and we can only wonder about how non-Christians would have reacted if they had read any of this.

The *Testament of Job* was probably written in the first century BCE or CE in Egyptian Jewish circles, perhaps in the Therapeutai sect described by Philo of Alexandria, and reworked by Christians probably in the second century, perhaps by Montanists, although Tertullian already knew and used this text (in his *De Patientia*) before he turned to this movement.¹⁹ The *Testament* portrays Job as the king of Egypt and has him destroy the temple of the idols. Jobab, as he was first called, had doubts about the nature of the pagan gods, and was granted a vision from the true God that temples were instruments of the devil to deceive people. Jobab prayed (3, 6): 'Grant me authority to go and purge his [the devil's] place so that I may put an end to the drink offerings being poured for him.' God warns Jobab that the devil will retaliate, and so Job will have to endure a series of calamities, as in the canonical book of Job, but in the *Testament of Job* his sufferings as a 'proto-martyr' are the consequence of an attack on a pagan sanctuary, sanctioned by God since Jobab receives the reassurance that he will be compensated for his losses. He said (5, 2): 'I took fifty youths with me, struck off for the temple of the idol, and leveled it to the ground.'

The *Book of Jubilees* (probably written around the middle of the second century BCE, popular with the Essenes and with early Church Fathers) displays a similar mentality towards idols and temples, and little or no compassion with idolaters. In *Jubilees* 12, 12–14, 'Abraham arose in the night and burned the house of the idols. And he burned everything in the house. And there was no man who knew. And they rose up in the night, and they wanted to save their gods from the midst of the fire. And Haran rushed to save them, and the fire flared up over him. And he was burned in the fire and died in Ur of the Chaldees before Terah his father. And they buried him in Ur of the Chaldees.'²⁰

One could also refer to the visions of divine wrath and the predictions of terror directed at the entire world in the *Sibylline Oracles*: of most passages it

19 See the introduction by R. Spittler, in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha 1: Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments* (Garden City, N.Y. 1983), 829–838; esp. 833–834. We quote this translation, 840–841.

20 See the introduction and translation by O.S. Wintermute in James H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha 2: Expansions of the Old Testament* (Garden City, N.Y. 1985), 43–44 (date), 80 (quote).

is almost impossible to say which sections are Jewish and which Christian,²¹ but the promises of brimstone and pestilence, of war and utter destruction are extended to list after list of cities and regions. Book after book document how historical direct violence provoked fantasies of violence, but we should not limit the analysis to the Apocrypha. The canonical Book of Revelation contains similar visions of hatred (Rev 8, 9, 17, 18). Mark Edwards wondered whether Christians, who no longer felt constrained by human law (Rom 6:1; 1Cor 6:12), did not act out these prophecies. 'It would be absurd to suppose that Christians never tried to accelerate the destruction of Rome, foretold in the *Apocalypse*.'²² Most Christians did not act, but it is hard to say how many relished the thought of witnessing the divine wrath. Tertullian invited his readers to anticipate the last day of judgment and rejoice in the spectacle organized for them to watch. The unbecoming pleasure with which Tertullian describes the fear and the sufferings of 'the nations' is another indication that Christianity has two faces: one is benevolent and charitable, the other not so much.²³ We should also add that Christian animosity was not only directed against non-Christians. As we said earlier, every category is a construct and early Christianity was divided into different groups. Celsus had also noted the internal hatred amongst Christians: 'These persons utter against one another dreadful blasphemies, saying all manner of things shameful to be spoken; nor will they yield in the slightest point for the sake of harmony, hating each other with a perfect hatred.'²⁴

4 Violence against Christians: Three Phases

The violence against Christians is usually described in terms of persecution, although this term is perhaps too broad and indiscriminating to describe the

21 See the introduction by Jane Lightfoot, *The Sibylline Oracles: With Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on the First and Second Books* (Oxford 2007).

22 Edwards, 'Severan Christianity', 416.

23 Tertullian, *De Spectaculis* 30: already quoted by Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall*, chapter 15, and by Nietzsche in his analysis of Christian 'ressentiment': *Genealogie der Moral*, Essay 1, Section 15.

24 Apud Origenem, *Contra Celsum* V, 63, compare with what Ammianus Marcellinus XXII, 5, 4 wrote later: *nullas infestas hominibus bestias, ut sunt sibi ferales plerique Christianorum expertus* (transl. by J.C. Rolfe, LCL 315): 'knowing as he [the emperor Julian] did from experience that no wild beasts are such enemies to mankind as are most of the Christians in their deadly hatred of one another'.

different phases and different types of violence suffered by Christians from non-Christians. Geoffrey de Ste. Croix made a sensible distinction between three phases.²⁵ The first phase ran until the Neronian persecution in Rome (64 CE): before this event Roman officials did not single out Christians as an independent entity. The violence Christians experienced in this first phase was seen as an internal Jewish problem, and must have been in accordance with the very small numbers of Christians in these first few decades. The second phase runs from Nero to Decius (249–251 CE), although it is misleading to conceive of this phase in terms of emperors since persecution of Christians was local, periodic and not initiated by emperors or even local magistrates. Christians faced persecution because they were denounced as Christians and-or because the populace started violent attacks against them. The government responded to these impulses but did not organize the attacks. This pattern changes with Decius (end of 249 CE) who started the third phase, which ran until the end of the so-called Great Persecution: in 313 CE.

For the first phase Ste. Croix summarized the official reactions as described by our (Christian) sources as 'impartiality or indifference towards the religious squabbles between Jews and Christians'. Since then an enormous amount of scholarly work has been done about the rhetoric of these sources and the reasons why the Christian authors wrote the way they did about anti-Christian violence and the role played therein by 'the synagogue' and by Roman officials. In some cases however the tendency to deconstruct 'Violence in the New Testament' as 'legends' seems to have taken the wrong rhetorical turn, ending up almost denying what we could call interdenominational Jewish violence.²⁶ Paul presents himself as a persecutor (Gal 1:13; Phil 3:6) and although it is true that we know of no other individual with a similar career, there is a difference

25 G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, 'Why were the Christians persecuted', *Past and Present* 26 (1963), 6–31; reprinted in De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, 105–152. We would like to refer to Danny Praet, 'Explaining the Christianization of the Roman Empire: Older Theories and Recent Developments', *Sacris Erudiri. Jaarboek voor Godsdienstgeschiedenis. A Journal on the Inheritance of Early and Medieval Christianity* 32 (1992–1993), 5–119, especially 29–33; 67–73 and 81–85.

26 This is the impression we get from many essays in Matthews and Gibson, *Violence in the New Testament*, where David Frankfurter, 'Violence and Religious Formation: an Afterword', 140–152, 141 concluded: 'Obviously this is not to deny that there were sporadic instances of persecution or organized violence against and among certain Jewish and quasi-Jewish groups in Antiquity—Jesus believers included. (...) it is clear from the studies in this volume that the letters of Paul, the Gospels of Matthew, John, and Luke, and the book of Revelation cannot themselves be used as evidence for violence.'

between rhetorical analysis of certain representations and denying that real events were being represented at all. The number of reports about violent outbursts between Jesus-followers and non-Christians are sufficiently high to conclude there was direct violence, and this must have been motivated by an exclusive interpretation of what Christians as Jews were allowed to do and preach according to other Jews. If the phrase in Suetonius, *Life of Claudius* 25, 4, 'Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantes Roma expulit', is taken as a reference to disturbances caused by the preaching of Christianity, we have a non-Christian testimony of Jewish-Christian violence in this phase.²⁷ As the new religion recruited more and more in gentile circles, the violence between Christians and Jews decreased since it was no longer an internal Jewish problem. There is scholarly consensus that Jews were not, as Tertullian²⁸ wrote, the 'fountain of persecutions' in the second and third centuries. But the enmity between Christians and Jews increased and claims like the one by Tertullian were the start of a tradition of cultural violence of Christians accusing Jews of persecuting them, which would lead to direct violence and legal measures against Jews in the fourth and fifth centuries.

Christians were singled out in the Neronian persecution or, as we should perhaps call it, the anti-Christian incident in Rome under Nero. Although the punishments were cruel to the point of sophistication, and although our sources claim a large number of Christians died, this persecution was local and very short lived. The torture used to persuade arrestees to give up other names was an efficient way of obtaining a large number of names but not necessarily a large number of Christians. The fact that Christians were singled out proves, by the way, that for some outsiders at least 'the ways' had sufficiently parted to target only the Jesus-followers and not the entire Jewish community.²⁹ Christians were known as Christians and, according to our sources, they were chosen as scapegoats by Nero because they had a wide reputation of hat-

27 Donna W. Hurley, *Suetonius, Divus Claudius* (Cambridge Greek and Latin Classics; Cambridge 2001), 176–178 for the pro's and con's. She concludes: 'the best conjecture is that Chrestus is Christus'. John P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus 1: The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New York 1991), 92 and 102, notes 15–16 also accepts the possibility that this refers to violent reactions against the preaching of Christianity, but all this remains very conjectural.

28 Tertullianus, *Scorpice* 10, 10; Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Tertullian* (The Early Church Fathers; London 2004), 48 for further discussion and references.

29 For the whole discussion about 'the parting', see now the chapters in Mitchell, *Cambridge History* by Judith Lieu, 'Self-definition vis à vis the Jewish matrix', 214–229 and Arthur J. Droge, 'Self-definition vis à vis the Graeco-Roman world', 230–244.

ing their fellow man.³⁰ The second phase thus started with an initiative by an emperor, and tradition linked persecutions in the first three centuries to emperors, but until the middle of the third century it is better not to think of violence against Christians in such terms. The outbursts were local and temporary and the initiative was taken by normal citizens: the relevant officials operated on the level of cities and provinces. They responded to complaints and outbursts of violence, trying to channel and control the hatred against Christians rather than starting persecutions on their own initiative. Christians were forced to deal with law-suits and what we could compare to 'pogroms', not with planned, organized persecutions. In most cases the government intervened to gain control over potentially dangerous local conflicts and our sources even give the impression that most officials were not overly zealous in punishing Christians. The letter of Pliny to Trajan (X, 96) and the imperial rescript give both the *modus operandi* 'conquirendi non sunt' (Pliny X, 97, 2), and an interesting picture of the paradoxical nature of Christianity. Pliny describes Christian practices as rather harmless and their moral standards even as high, but the stubborn refusal of some to sacrifice and-or to respect his authority also document the disruptive potential of Christianity for the normal social and political order, and the violent reaction of this order once it was confronted with such latent stubbornness or, as the pagan officials would see it, latent hostility.

5 The 'Pax Deorum' System as Cultural Violence Leading to Direct Violence

Graeco-Roman cults should not be described in terms of belief or doctrine, but in terms of ritual.³¹ There was however at least one meta-belief related to ritual practice and this was relevant for the violent interaction between pagans and Christians in the first three centuries. In the second phase of the persecutions, and possibly even in the state-organized persecutions of Decius, Valerian and the Tetrarchy, the refusal of the Christians to participate in the religious practices of the communities they were supposed to be members of, triggered

30 Tacitus, *Annales* XV, 44: *odium humani generis*; compare his analysis in *Historiae* V, 5 of internal solidarity among Jews combined with *adversus omnes alios hostile odium*; Suetonius, *Nero* 16, 2: *Afflicti suppliciis Christiani, genus hominum superstitionis nouae ac maleficae*.

31 John Scheid, *Quand croire c'était faire: les rites sacrificiels des Romains* (Paris 2004).

negative reactions from pagans, mostly in times of crisis, as was evoked with typical sarcasm by Tertullian (*Apologeticum* 40). One could refer to the scapegoat mechanism and reduce a religious belief about the lack of ritual respect for the gods to a psycho-social reality, but we would argue that this *pax deorum*-belief or belief in the reality of the anger of the gods³² was a type of cultural violence which blamed people refusing to participate in community rituals for causing all sorts of calamities, and motivated direct violence against Christians. If one accepts the honest conviction of these persecutors, if one accepts they really believed Christians had called upon the entire community a form of divine retribution, then Christians were seen by at least some non-Christians as people who brought violence upon their fellow citizens by their rejection of the gods of the community. We will discuss the political problems of religious exclusiveness and inclusiveness further *infra*, but should first briefly discuss the third phase and then try to assess the scope of interreligious violence in these first centuries.

It would seem that the first general state organized attack against Christianity should be dated to the end of 249 CE when Decius issued a first of a series of decrees which forced everyone to sacrifice to the gods of the Empire. Whether these measures were initially directed against the Christians is debated, but they were soon singled out as a group in which many refused to partake in these rituals. The limits set to this contribution do not allow us to discuss the persecutions under Decius, Valerian and Diocletian-the Tetrarchy. We will limit ourselves to some reflections about the possible death toll of the persecution of Christians.

6 The Number of Victims

As Jan Bremmer remarked during the conference, estimates of the number of Christian victims seem to be a function of the researcher's positive or negative attitude towards Christianity.³³ The number of victims has been exaggerated not only by ancient Christian sources and has decreased continuously since the scientific study of the *Acta Martyrum* began.³⁴ But it is still being exag-

32 Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians in the Mediterranean World from the Second Century A.D. to the Conversion of Constantine* (Harmondsworth 1986), 230–237 and 419–492.

33 See Jan Bremmer, *The Rise of Christianity through the Eyes of Gibbon, Harnack and Rodney Stark* (Groningen 2010), 20–23.

34 See Danny Praet, 'Susanna, the Fathers and the *Passio Sereni* (BHL 7595–7596): Sexual Morals, Intertextuality and Early Christian self-definition', *Journal of Ancient Christian-*

gerated by modern scholars. In a companion volume to the *World Christian Encyclopedia*, entitled *World Christian Trends AD 30–AD 2200*, edited by David B. Barrett, Todd M. Johnson, Christopher R. Guidry, and Peter F. Crossing,³⁵ the chapter ‘Martyrology: The demographics of Christian martyrdom AD 33–AD 2001’ knows of 69,420,000 Christian martyrs and specifies that the ancient church had suffered three persecutions with more than 100,000 victims each: one even with more than 500,000 martyrs dead. Origen, whose father was killed in the persecutions and who had once wanted to follow his example, was perhaps closest to the truth when he wrote that ‘only a very small number have died’. Among modern researchers William Frend proposed about 3000, but Liebeschütz thought even this number was too high.³⁶

7 Victims and Voluntary Martyrs

Pagan intellectuals knew the Christian willingness or even eagerness to die but were unanimously appalled by it. The few short references to Christians in Greek and Roman sources of the first two centuries are quite clear: they know Christians have no fear of death, in fact this is the central thing they seem to know about Christians, but they do not appreciate this lack of fear because it is brought about by the wrong reasons. Epictetus after discussing madness as a cause for the absence of fear of death also mentions, in passing (IV, 7, 6; tr. W.A. Oldfather): ‘habit, as with the Galilaeans’. In a similar context Marcus Aurelius (XI, 3, tr. G. Long) argues that the soul’s willingness to be

ity—*Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 14.3 (2011), 556–580; 556. The recent literature is enormous: Diana Wood (ed.), *Martyrs and Martyrologies* (Studies in Church History 30; Oxford 1993); Glenn W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (Cambridge 1995); Walter Ameling (ed.), *Märtyrer und Märtyrerakten* (Altertumswissenschaftliches Kolloquium 6; Stuttgart 2002); Elizabeth Anne Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York 2004); Johan Leemans (ed.), *Martyrdom and Persecution in Late Antique Christianity: Festschrift Boudewijn Dehandschutter* (Leuven 2010); Jakob Engberg, Uffe Holmsgaard Eriksen, and Anders Klostergaard Petersen (eds), *Contextualising Early Christian Martyrdom* (Frankfurt am Main & Bern 2011).

35 The Encyclopedia was edited by the same (late) David B. Barrett and published by Oxford University Press. The Trends-volume is published by Carey in Pasadena, California: Carey, 2001, the estimates can be found on p. 227 and 229. See Candida Moss, *The Myth of Persecution: How Early Christians Invented a Story of Martyrdom* (New York 2013).

36 Origenes, *Contra Celsum* III, 8; G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, ‘Aspects of the “Great” Persecution’, *Harvard Theological Review* 47 (1954), 104; Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians*, 596; J.H.W.G. Liebeschütz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford 1979), 252.

separated from the body should come 'from a man's own judgment, not from mere obstinacy, as with the Christians, but considerably and with dignity and in a way to persuade another, without tragic show'. Lucian also knew of their contempt for death. He referred to Jesus as 'the crucified sophist' (*De morte Peregrini* 13) and ridiculed the Christian naïve veneration for their imprisoned coreligionists, even when a fraud like Peregrinus Proteus was only after their money. Galen of Pergamon was the only intellectual who referred to Christians with some degree of respect: he knew their continence and—again—their fearlessness of death (he adds the latter could be witnessed every day) but regrets this way of life so close to the philosophical is not based upon rational reflection but on the authority of miracles.³⁷ Christian sources have also given us examples of voluntary martyrs:³⁸ Eusebius tells us about Christians who presented themselves to the authorities with their hands already tied on their backs. According to his Acts, Euplus called out in the courtroom, 'I want to die for I am a Christian'.³⁹ Provocation leading to one's own death is not yet violence in itself although it points to a level of fanaticism and can be understood as the violence of the powerless turned on oneself, at least for the time being.

8 Christian Violence against Idols

Martyr acts show us Christians who were already arrested and then displayed hostility towards statues of the gods, but there is also one example of Christians who first attacked 'idols' and then were arrested or killed. From Origen's refutation of Celsus (VIII, 38) we know that Celsus knew Christians who acted upon the verbal ridicule of idols we find in the Bible and in Christian writers. He knew Christians who boasted about their actions, how they went up

37 Preserved in Arabic, see Benko, 'Pagan criticism', 1098–1099.

38 See Christel Butterweck, *'Martyriumssucht' in der Alten Kirche? Studien zur Darstellung und Deutung frühchristlicher Martyrien* (Tübingen 1995); Jean-Louis Voisin, 'Prosopographie des morts volontaires chrétiens: en particulier chez Eusèbe de Césarée', in Marie-Françoise Baslez and Françoise Prévot (eds), *Prosopographie et histoire religieuse: actes du colloque tenu en l'Université Paris XII-Val de Marne les 27 & 28 octobre 2000* (Paris 2005), 351–362; Anthony R. Birley, 'Voluntary Martyrs in the Early Church: Heroes or Heretics?' *Cristianesimo nella storia* 1 (2006), 99–127; G.E.M. de Ste. Croix, 'Voluntary martyrs', in De Ste. Croix, *Christian Persecution*, 153–200.

39 De Ste. Croix, 'Why were?', 21; Eusebius, *De martyribus Palaestinae* 3, 2–4; idem, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VIII, 9, 5; *Acta Eupli* 1; Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam* 5, 1.

to the idol of Zeus or Apollo or any other god, to 'blaspheme and to strike with their hand' (βλασφημῶ καὶ ῥαπίζω) the statues. Although Origen, as a first line of defense, denied this actually happened and added, as a second line of defense, that if it happened such actions were only done by scoundrels without *paideia*, not by true Christians, there are several reasons to believe this sort of provocations actually did occur.⁴⁰ In the middle of the third century Cyprian, in his *Ad Fortunatum de Exhortatione Martyrii* 5, referred to the Old Testament exhortation (Deut 13:13–19) that idolaters should not be left alive and whole cities should be burnt to the ground to eradicate idolatry among the chosen people. He also offered the exemplum of Mattathias Maccabee (1 Macc 2:23–25) who had killed a royal official and a fellow Jew who wanted to sacrifice. Cyprian then connects these texts to steadfastness in persecution and does not draw the more logical conclusion that Christians should go on the offensive but his exempla suggest some Christians would not tolerate idolatry much longer. There is even one text known to us documenting what one could call Christian suicide-martyrs. This text has come down as canon 60 of the Council of Elvira, Spain. The council itself is difficult to date: it was held in the beginning of the fourth century, between 300 and 320. Some canons attributed to this council might actually be from other councils, be it later or earlier, but it has been suggested that the canons 59 to 77 are of an earlier date: 298, which is five years before the start of the Great Persecution.⁴¹ Canon 60, *de his qui destruentes idola occiduntur*, deals with the question whether someone who has attacked a pagan statue to destroy it, and is killed because of this action, can be considered a martyr.⁴² This canon teaches us three things.⁴³ First the

40 See Ramsay MacMullen, *Christianizing the Roman Empire* (New Haven, CT 1984), 60–62 for provocative anti-pagan display during exorcisms.

41 Some canons might have been added later according to M. Meigne and S. Martinez, see 'The date of the council of Elvira' in De Ste. Croix, *Christian persecution*, 99–104; Eckhard Reichert, *Die Canones der Synode von Elvira: Einleitung und Kommentar* (Hamburg, Dissertation Universität Hamburg 1990), 21–23 on the date, 49 on the composite nature ('Gemeingut geworden'), and 182–184 text and commentary of canon 60. Here Reichert also gives patristic sources and modern works on anti-pagan attacks in the third and fourth centuries.

42 The canon reads: *Si quis idola fregerit et ibidem fuerit occisum quatenus in Evangelio scriptum non est, neque invenitur sub Apostolis unquam factum, placuit in numero eum non recipi martyrum*. As Reichert, *Die Canones*, 184, note 795 commented the term *occisum* (and we would add *ibidem*) does not point to a trial but to an immediate mob-reaction: 'Gedacht ist offenbar daran, dass eine aufgebrachte Menge den Täter tötet.'

43 For the sake of nuance, we want to add that the collection also teaches us that some Christians continued to participate in pagan rituals: the canon just before the one we

reality of aggressive acts committed by at least some Christians against the very existence of pagan sanctuaries, either before, during or shortly after the Great Persecution, but well before the Empire had become Christian in any sense of the word. Second, a positive reception of such violent actions amongst at least some Christians, who would honour them as martyrs. And thirdly, the rejection of such actions by the hierarchy, who at least in Spain, at the end of the third or in the beginning of the fourth century, did not encourage or honour similar actions because, they added, such actions find no support in Scripture or the Apostles.

9 Violence Caused by Christian Non-Violence?

A paradoxical aspect of the violence experienced by Christians during persecutions is that it might have been caused by their refusal to serve in the Roman military. This is however a very uncertain point. Celsus (Origen, *Contra Celsum* VIII, 69–73) claims that the Christians are a danger to the security and the stability of the empire because they refuse to sacrifice to the gods protecting Rome but also because they do not fight for the emperor. Origen does not deny this claim but offers a non-military solution by pointing out that the Christians pray for the welfare of the emperor and of the empire while also offering a more structural solution to incursions and war by preaching universal love and peace. It is somewhat strange that Origen did not simply refute the accusation by pointing to the fact, accepted by most modern scholars and attested amongst other things by military martyrs,⁴⁴ that Christians did serve in the Roman military, where they might get into trouble by refusing to participate

are discussing, 59 reads: *De fidelibus ne ad Capitolium causa sacrificandi ascendant*. Hal Drake, *Constantine and the Bishops: the Politics of Intolerance* (Baltimore 2000), 223–225 underlined the fact that the hierarchy chose *not* to support violent attacks as in canon 60.

44 See Hippolyte Delehay, *Les légendes grecques des saints militaires* (Paris 1909); André Corvisier, *Les saints militaires* (Paris 2006); on war and pacifism in the first centuries: Adolf von Harnack, *Militia Christi. Die christliche Religion und der Soldatenstand in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Darmstadt 1963; original 1905); Cecil John Cadoux, *The Early Christian Attitude to War: A Contribution to the History of Christian Ethics* (London 1919). See also Jean-Michel Hornus, *Évangile et Labarum. Étude sur l'attitude du christianisme primitif devant les problèmes de l'État, de la guerre et de la violence* (Genève 1960); S. Windass, *Le christianisme et la violence. Étude sociologique et historique de l'attitude du christianisme à l'égard de la guerre* (Paris 1966); Robert J. Daly, John Helgeland et al., *Christians and the Military: The Early Experience* (Philadelphia, 1985).

in pagan rituals, not because they suddenly confessed to being pacifists. It is highly doubtful whether this accusation was ever a real motive for persecution of Christians.

10 The Religious Politics of Septimius Severus and Julia Domna

We would like to use the rest of this contribution to reflect upon the religious politics of the Severan dynasty, because this was a pivotal period in the history of the pagan-Christian relations: it would seem attempts were made to fit Christianity into the religious system of the Roman Empire but by the middle of the third century, the persecution of Decius would change from accommodation to confrontation. The *Historia Augusta* claims that the African emperor Septimius Severus, who married Julia Domna, the daughter of a priest of the Emesan Sun God, issued a ban on conversion to both Judaism and Christianity. There has been and still is some debate whether Septimius Severus did indeed issue such a decree (and if he did, whether this was in 199 or 202).⁴⁵ The *Life of Severus* in the *Historia Augusta* 17, 1 reads, *Iudaeos fieri sub gravi poena vetuit. idem etiam de Christianis sanxit*. But there is no further external evidence for such a decree and it should perhaps be seen as an internal, 'literary' contrast within the *Historia Augusta* between the portrait of Septimius and that of Alexander Severus, who is portrayed as someone who had in his private *lararium*, next to statues of his ancestors, of Orpheus, and Apollonius of Tyana, also images of both Abraham and Jesus Christ.⁴⁶ Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VI, 1 mentions Origen's father and many others as martyrs during a persecution under Septimius Severus, in Egypt, but he does not mention the decree.⁴⁷ The *Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis* set in Carthage is often mentioned as the result of this anti-proselytism decree but just as the deaths in Alexandria the events pertaining to Perpetua can have been part of the normal legal situation.⁴⁸

45 See A. Alcock, 'Persecution under Septimius Severus', *Enchoria* 11 (1982), 1–5; Rosa Mentxaka, 'La persécution du christianisme à l'époque de Septime Sévère. Considérations juridiques sur la Passion de Perpétue et Félicité', in *Églises et pouvoir politique* (Angers 1987), 63–82; François Ploton-Nicollet, 'Septime Sévère et le christianisme: essai d'étude critique des sources', *Litterae Caelestes* 1 (2005), 179–188.

46 *Historia Augusta, Alexander Severus* 29, 2: *in larario suo, in quo et divos principes sed optimos electos et animas sanctiores, in quibus Apollonium et, quantum scriptor suorum temporum dicit, Christum, Abraham et Orpheum et huiuscemodi ceteros habebat ac maiorum effigies*.

47 Anne Dagret-Gagey, *Septime Sévère. Rome, l'Afrique et l'Orient* (Paris 2000), 406.

48 Anthony Birley, *Septimius Severus: The African Emperor* (London 1999), 221: 'In his capacity

11 Perception of Judaism and Christianity as Socially Disruptive Religions

The *Life of Apollonius of Tyana* was commissioned by the wife of Septimius, the Syrian empress Julia Domna (*Vita Apollonii* 1, 3) and written by Flavius Philostratus, the leading figure of the so-called Second Sophistic.⁴⁹ It is one of the most complicated and elusive literary works to have survived and it describes how the Pythagorean sage travelled the world, learning from but also correcting religious and philosophical traditions from almost every culture in the then known world. As his name and his status as a 'new Pythagoras' would suggest, Apollonius had a special veneration for Helios-Apollo and this was perhaps also the reason why the empress from Emesa was interested in his life and thought. But Apollonius wanted to give a place to every deity and to every cult or, at least, to almost every cult. According to Philostratus, the wise man from Tyana went to Persia and India, Egypt and Ethiopia, Rome, and the shores of the Atlantic. He studied cult-statues and sanctuaries, talked to sages and kings everywhere, but there was one country he refused to visit: Judea. Apollonius had been summoned there by Vespasian. The emperor (*Vita Apollonii* 5, 27, 3) 'felt scruples about his power while besieging Jerusalem (...) but Apollonius refused to enter a country whose inhabitants defiled (ἐμίανον) it by their actions and their misfortunes'. This can be interpreted as part of Apollonius' life of ritual purity and his Pythagorean philosophy of non-violence, taking from the earth only what she gave willingly:⁵⁰ he avoided a country defiled by the massive bloodshed between Romans and Jews.⁵¹ The *Vita Apollonii* is notoriously ambiguous and

of acting governor he [Hilarius] put some Christians, Perpetua and her companions, to death. There is no sign that Severus took any interest in this event.' See also Daguet-Gagey, *Septime Sévère*, 406–410 for references and discussion. But recently Frend, *Persecutions*, 511 wrote about our sources: 'There seems to be no reason to doubt ...'

49 See the essays in Kristoffel Demoen and Danny Praet, *Theios Sophistès: Essays on Philostratus, Life of Apollonius of Tyana* (Mnemosyne Monographs Series 305; Leiden 2009) and in Ewen Bowie and Jas Elsner (eds), *Philostratus* (Cambridge 2009).

50 This 'ecological', philosophical way of life had led Apollonius to adopt a vegetarian diet, avoid bloody sacrifices, to wear only linen, 'the wool of the earth' and to reject leather shoes (1, 8). We should however refer to a disturbing passage (4, 10) in which Philostratus has Apollonius order the Ephesians to encircle an old beggar and stone him to death because, as was revealed later, he was a demon in disguise.

51 See also *Vita Apollonii* 6, 29, 1 where Apollonius praises Titus for not accepting a crown after the capture of Jerusalem (Jones II, 185): 'it showed the highest restraint not to want a crown for bloodshed'. In the same passage, the view uttered by Titus that he was only

difficult to interpret: as its hero, who is called the new Proteus, the *Life* is 'defying capture', it is κρείττων τοῦ ἀλῶναι (VA 1, 4). First, we should keep in mind that the *Life* does not mention Apollonius *ever* set foot in Judea, either before or after the Jewish revolt, which could mean bloodshed was not the only reason why he avoided this place. Or, as we should say, why Philostratus has his hero avoid this region, because it is impossible to reconstruct 'the historical Apollonius' from the sources. There might have been a more fundamental reason why Philostratus makes Apollonius avoid Judea. This could be argued from another passage in which the exclusiveness of Judaism is attacked, but again it is hard to pinpoint what the view of Philostratus and of the Apollonius-character are, because the strong rejection of Judaism is actually put into the mouth of Apollonius' strongest opponent: the Stoic philosopher Euphrates. Whether Apollonius shared this view or not can only be deduced from the fact that, in the discussion, Apollonius does not reject or refute it, but he does not endorse it explicitly either. So Philostratus has included very strong criticism of an exclusive religious tradition in a work where almost all the traditions of the world are mentioned with respect and integrated in a sort of religious commonwealth. But neither the author nor the main character can be said to have committed clearly to this rejection of Judaism. The anti-Jewish comments are uttered during a discussion with Vespasian and the philosophers Apollonius, Euphrates, and Dio of Prusa (VA 5, 33, 4; Jones II, 63–65):

You had an army, and the forces you were leading against the Jews, were more suitable for punishing Nero. The Jews cut themselves off long ago, not only from the Romans, but from all mankind, since people who have devised an unsociable way of life (βίον ἄμικτον), with no meals, libations, prayers or sacrifices in common with other men, have moved further away from us than Susa, Bactria and the Indians beyond that. There was no point in punishing them as rebels, when they would have been better left unconquered.

It is hard, if not impossible to say whether Apollonius or Philostratus endorsed this view, but it was clearly conceivable in the first decades of the third century to reject Judaism because of its exclusivism and even to exclude it from the religious commonwealth of the Roman Empire. It is interesting to see how a

an instrument of divine wrath (θεῶ δὲ ὀργήν φέραντι) is, as always, difficult to interpret but does not seem to be very positive about the Jewish revolt, perhaps about Judaism in general.

military-political entity as the Roman Empire is defined by a shared or at least a compatible religious culture. This religious compatibility, this open system in which one is prepared to partake in rituals with other men can establish a world-culture, and Philostratus even claims Indian and Greek religion and philosophy are directly related. The question then arises what people with similar views on inclusive and exclusive religious traditions thought about another group who chose 'an unsociable way of life, with no meals, libations, prayers or sacrifices in common with other men': Christians. This group was clearly growing and becoming a threat to the open system, whereas Jews in the third century could in fact, just as Euphrates had said, be simply left out of the system. Pagans could deplore the state of religious segregation or even hate Jews, but Jewish proselytism, if it existed, did not threaten the religious commonwealth.

12 Christians in the *Life of Apollonius*?

The question then arises whether this anti-Jewish passage in the *Vita Apollonii* is also or maybe even primarily directed against Christianity. It is odd that Christians are never mentioned in the *Life of Apollonius*. Although there is not a single allusion to Christianity in the entire oeuvre of Philostratus, he must have known about this religion; and his centenarian main character was a contemporary of Jesus, the Apostles and even most of the Apostolic Fathers. Greek and Roman intellectuals from the second century onwards, Tacitus, Suetonius, Pliny, Lucian, Galen, and Marcus Aurelius mentioned them. Celsus wrote an entire treatise against them in the 160s; and in the beginning of the third century, the number of well-known Christians was too high, the links between Christians and the Emesan-Severan circles too numerous for Philostratus not to have known them.⁵² The attitude in these circles was double: as we have seen, Septimius might have issued a decree against proselytism and, if we can believe the *Historia Augusta*, Alexander Severus included both Abraham, Christ and Apollonius of Tyana amongst his favourites.⁵³ Eusebius (*Historia Ecclesiastica*

52 Simon Swain has given a list in 'Culture and Nature in Philostratus', in Bowie, *Philostratus*, 36–37; see also S. Swain, 'Defending Hellenism: Philostratus, In honour of Apollonius', in M. Edwards, M. Goodman, and R. Price (eds), *Apologetics in the Roman Empire: Pagans, Jews and Christians* (Oxford 1999), 157–196.

53 If it is a late fourth-century invention, then the *lararium* testifies to the wishes of 'the last pagans' to come to a form of religious co-existence, but that puts the passage beyond the scope of my contribution.

VI, 21, 3–4) tells us that Julia Mamaea, the niece of Julia Domna and mother of Alexander Severus, sent for Origen with a military escort to hear from him about Christianity. Although Christians are never mentioned in the *Vita Apollonii*, it contains a few passages which are possibly influenced by or competing with the Gospels,⁵⁴ notably the story of the resurrection of the young bride in Rome (VA 4, 45), which is very similar to the story of the daughter of Jairus in Mark 5:22–43 or the son of the widow of Nain in Luke 7:11–20. But Philostratus gives his readers two options: one very rational in which the girl was not really dead and Apollonius had noticed her slight breathing in the drizzle, the other that he performed a real miracle but, as always, Philostratus does not choose: ‘the explanation of this has proved unfathomable, not just to me but to the bystanders’. So if we accept the suggestion of parallels with Gospel-stories, Philostratus’ skeptical *epochè* about the reality of miracles was maybe intended for people who could do with a little less certainty in their religious beliefs.

The relevance of the *Life of Apollonius* for the debate with Christianity was recognized in antiquity, and the sage from Tyana has been explicitly compared to Jesus of Nazareth. Sossianus Hierocles, who was one of the ideologists of the Great Persecution,⁵⁵ wrote a work probably called Φιλαλήθης λόγος πρὸς Χριστιανούς (which was addressed *at* but not as such written *against* the Christians) in which he compared the two sages and decided in favour of Apollonius.⁵⁶ His master argument is worth remembering in this context. The start of the syllogism is that pagans do not consider Apollonius to be a god, let alone the only god. We should note that Philostratus offers no less than three birth-stories and three versions of the way Apollonius left this earthly life.⁵⁷ Some say he is

54 Erkki Koskeniemi, *Apollonios von Tyana in der neutestamentlichen Exegese: Forschungsbericht und Weiterführung der Diskussion* (Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament. Reihe 2, 61; Tübingen 1994).

55 Timothy D. Barnes, ‘Sossianus Hierocles and the antecedents of the Great Persecution’, *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 80 (1976), 239–252; William H.C. Frend, ‘Prelude to the great persecution. The propaganda war’, *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 38 (1987), 1–18; but see Salvatore Borzi, ‘Sulla datazione del “Contra Hieroclem” di Eusebio di Cesarea: una proposta’, *Salesianum* 65 (2003), 149–160 who would date it towards the end of the persecution.

56 See Thomas Hägg, ‘Hierocles the lover of truth and Eusebius the sophist’, *Symbolae Osloenses* 67 (1992), 138–150, also on the question whether Eusebius wrote the refutation traditionally published together with the *Vita Apollonii*. See the third volume of the Loeb Philostratus edition by C. Jones, *Eusebius’ Reply to Hierocles*, 147–257, and Forrat Marguerite and Edouard des Places (eds.), *Contre Hiérocès* (SC 333; Paris 1987).

57 Danny Praet, ‘Earnest Play: Religion, Rhetoric and Intertextuality in the Life of Apollonius of Tyana by Flavius Philostratus’, in Ivo Volt (ed.), *Quattuor Lustra: papers celebrating the*

born a mortal and died in his bed in Ephesus. Others call him a demi-god, the son of a mortal woman and Zeus Horkios, and there is a story he disappeared from a temple of Athena in Lindos, Rhodos. In the third, most miraculous version Apollonius is born as the reincarnation of Proteus, and he left this world in a dramatic apotheosis from the sanctuary of Dictynna-Britomartis in Crete. The author of the *Vita Apollonii*, as always, offers no clear choice between these three possible ontological identities of his hero. Intertextual play suggests that Philostratus favoured the divine status of Apollonius, but this is so subtle that it is safe to conclude Philostratus never fully committed to either one of the possibilities.⁵⁸ The *Life* leaves it to the reader to believe in or be skeptical about the divine nature of Apollonius. Hierocles uses this as the start of his argument: whether pagans see Apollonius as a sage, a 'divine' philosopher, a demi-god, or perhaps the reincarnation of Proteus, even the highest ontological status suggested here would only make him a minor divinity in the whole Greco-Roman pantheon. Nevertheless, in the second part of his argument, Hierocles argues that Apollonius is superior to Jesus Christ in every possible way. Both his general lifestyle, the miracles Apollonius performed, and the wisdom he proclaimed: everything makes the Pythagorean sage superior when compared to Jesus Christ. The conclusion is directed *at* the Christians but aimed *against* their exclusiveness. How then, Hierocles concluded, can Christians maintain that Jesus is not only a god, not only the highest god among others, but the only true god? Hierocles was willing, so to speak, to include a statue of Jesus next to one of Apollonius, as Alexander Severus perhaps did or as the author of the *Historia Augusta* invented, but Christians should accept that their own favourite sage or god deserved only one position among many, and not necessarily the highest position. The argument Hierocles wanted to make was, from his polytheistic point of view, not aimed against Christianity as such—it could in theory find its place within the hierarchy of divine men and gods venerated all over the world—but against the arrogant Christian claim of being the only true religion, venerating in the only correct way the only real divinity.

Hierocles attacked the Christian exclusivism with arguments. We do not know the exact date of publication of his work, but our sources tell us he did more than just publish arguments. He also participated in the bloody perse-

20th anniversary of the re-establishment of classical studies at the University of Tartu (*Acta Societatis Morgnesternianae* 4–5; Tartu 2012), 109–126.

58 Danny Praet, Kristoffel Demoen, and Wannes Gyselinck, 'Apollonius and Dionysos, Domitian and Pentheus: Echoes of Homer and of Euripides' *Bacchae* in the *Vita Apollonii*, *Latomus* 70 (2011), 1058–1067: the intertextual play suggests that Apollonius was a 'theos' in human form.

cution of Christians. It would be fascinating to know for sure what he used first: arguments or violence? Whether other political officials read open or covert intellectual criticism of Christianity, like the works of Celsus or Philostratus, we do not know. Decius probably did not. And Christians in antiquity never accepted the pagan offer to be included as one 'way' among many. Twenty to thirty years after Philostratus published his remarkable manifesto of open-ended skepticism and religious-philosophical inclusiveness, the Graeco-Roman world toughened and the Second Sophistic turned into an age of increasing exclusiveness and intolerance in which rational religious polemics turned into real violence.

13 Conclusion

This contribution addressed the problem of violence by and violence against Christians in the first three centuries of the common era by using the definition of both direct and cultural violence as developed by Johan Galtung. Ancient religions offer examples of both and this paper argues that violence cannot always be explained by non-religious factors but is inherent to the traditions themselves. The *pax deorum* mechanism identified the Christian refusal to sacrifice as the cause of catastrophe and triggered direct violence against Christians. Direct violence by Christians is very rare in the first three centuries but the paper offers examples of a violent discourse in Jewish and Christian sources as a prefiguration of real violence against idols and temples in later centuries. The Kitos-war is perhaps the closest example of a religious war in the Roman period and, although Christians were not involved, this paper asks the question whether Greek and Roman intellectuals saw the religious exclusivism common to both Judaism and Christianity as a threat to the religious inclusiveness of the Empire, in which case Christian proselytism would have identified the latter as the greatest threat. The final stage of violence against Christians, large scale state persecutions, were accompanied by a religious 'war' of propaganda. Intellectuals close to officials instigating direct violence against Christians attacked their exclusiveness. In the context of the Great Persecution Hierocles used *The Life of Apollonius of Tyana* to attack Christian claims to superiority. This work by Flavius Philostratus is extremely difficult to interpret and the link between Philostratus and the religious politics of the Severan dynasty is a matter of conjecture but the rejection of Jewish exclusiveness is so clear and the tension in this work between allusions to the Gospels and the absence of any explicit reference to Christianity have triggered the question whether Philostratus was also thinking of Christian exclusivism. His work

combines religious inclusivism with an epistemological skepticism which only rejects *exclusive* religious truth-claims, and it can perhaps be interpreted as the terms on which pagan intellectuals were willing to include Christianity in their religious-cultural system. What lay ahead was however far less subtle.

Eusebius' View on Constantine and His Policy

Fred Ledegang

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Whether I am successful or not,
it will give me satisfaction to have
done my part, to the best of my
ability, in contributing to the record
of the greatest people in the world ...

LIVY *Book I, preface 3* trans. M. GRANT

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1 Praise and Criticism

Constantine is a controversial historical figure. He has been praised and abused. In the 18th century Voltaire describes him as a tyrant in his *Dictionnaire philosophique*.¹ In the 19th century Burckhardt styles him a power politician, 'an egoist in purple, whose sole aim in all he does and condones is to expand his own power'.² In the 20th century the Belgian Grégoire expresses himself in the same vein and compares him with Napoleon: 'Constantin fut le Napoléon de la grande révolution religieuse du IV^e siècle'.³

In his recently published book *Defending Constantine* Peter Leithart makes a stand against these critics of Constantine. He opposes particularly the Menonite John Howard Yoder, who in several publications proceeding from his pacifistic background denounces Constantinianism as the fall of Christianity.⁴

1 Voltaire, *Dictionnaire philosophique* (ed. J. Benda and R. Naves; Paris 1961), 129–132 s.v. Christianisme.

2 J. Burckhardt, *Die Zeit Constantins des Grossen* (ed. H.E. Friedrich; s.l. 1954), 319.

3 H. Grégoire, 'La "conversion" de Constantin', *Revue de l'université de Bruxelles* 36 (1930/1), 231–272 (270).

4 P.J. Leithart, *Defending Constantine: The Twilight of an Empire and the Dawn of Christendom* (Downers Grove 2010). Cp. G.J. Heering, *The Fall of Christianity*, London 1930.

Leithart, however, is not the only one who gives a more balanced and positive picture of Constantine. Baynes,⁵ Vogt,⁶ Dörries,⁷ and Kraft⁸ had already preceded him.

The different views on Constantine are connected with the line of approach that is taken. Even in antiquity opinions on him differed greatly. Christian authors like Eusebius of Caesarea and Lactantius, who were contemporaries of Constantine and were in his entourage, gave a positive picture. Julian the Apostate (361–363 CE) and the heathen historian Zosimus (about 500 CE) passed a negative judgment.⁹

The criticism on Constantine often goes hand in hand with the criticism on Eusebius.¹⁰ He is said to have idolized Constantine. Burckhardt calls Eusebius the most awful eulogist, who thoroughly falsified his picture.¹¹ Erik Peterson considers the works of Eusebius as the prototype of 'political theology'. He blames him for three things: that he propagates a Christian ideology, that he carries on propaganda, and that he made a clever use of rhetoric. Therefore he is in his view more a sophist than a historian.¹² Although Barnes in his book *Constantine and Eusebius* also points out 'grave deficiencies' in Eusebius, he expresses a more lenient judgment. He emphasizes that Eusebius gives a wealth of information, of which, however, he gives his own interpretation.¹³

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- 5 N.H. Baynes, *Constantine the Great and the Christian Church* (*The Raleigh Lecture on History* 1929) (London 1972²).
 - 6 J. Vogt, 'Die Bedeutung des Jahres 312 für die Religionspolitik Konstantins des Grossen', in H. Kraft (ed.), *Konstantin der Grosse* (Darmstadt 1974), 247–272; 'Die Constantinische Frage', in *ibidem*, 345–387.
 - 7 H. Dörries, *Das Selbstzeugnis Kaiser Konstantins* (Göttingen 1954); *Konstantin der Grosse* (Stuttgart 1958).
 - 8 H. Kraft, *Kaiser Konstantins religiöse Entwicklung* (Tübingen 1955).
 - 9 Julian reproaches him with the innovations which he brought in and held against him that he had thrown overboard old laws and customs (Ammianus Marcellinus, *Res gestae* XXI, 10, 8 (ed. W. Seyfarth) and Zosimus, *Historia nova* II, 7; 29; 32–39 (ed. F. Paschoud)).
 - 10 Examples in G. Ruhbach, 'Die politische Theologie Eusebs von Caesarea', in G. Ruhbach (ed.), *Die Kirche angesichts der Konstantinischen Wende* (Darmstadt 1976), 236–258, esp. 238–239.
 - 11 Burckhardt, *Zeit Constantins*, 256.
 - 12 E. Peterson, *Der Monotheismus als politisches Problem. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte der politischen Theologie im Imperium Romanum* (Leipzig 1935). A reaction on Peterson in C. Schmitt, 'Eusebius als der Prototyp Politischer Theologie', in Ruhbach, *Kirche*, 220–235.
 - 13 T.D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass., London 1981), 140–147.

2 Eusebius on Constantine

For the picture of Constantine which Eusebius sketches, we have to resort to book VIII–X of his *Church History*,¹⁴ the two orations which have been handed down to us under the name of *Laus Constantini*,¹⁵ and his *Vita Constantini*.¹⁶ It is good to realize that the final version of his *Church History* probably dates from 325 CE, when Constantine had become absolute sovereign, and that the orations mentioned and his *Life of Constantine* date from the last years of Eusebius' life, when his view on Constantine had taken its final form.

To do justice to his view on emperor Constantine and his policy it is important to have an eye for the historical situation. At the beginning of the tenth book of his *Church History* Eusebius expresses the feeling of relief among Christians, when under Constantine a period of persecution and oppression had come to an end. The final persecution, which had started under Diocletian in 303 CE, was hardly behind them. 'The whole race of God's enemies had verily been removed ... and in a moment blotted out of men's sight; so that once more a divine saying has fulfilment, that which says: "I have seen the wicked in great power, and lifted up like the cedars of Lebanon. And I passed by, and, lo, he was not: and I sought his place, and it was not found" (Ps 37:35–36)', Eusebius shouted with joy.¹⁷ We must not forget that Eusebius had witnessed from

14 G. Bardy (ed.), *Eusèbe de Césarée, Histoire ecclésiastique livres I–IV, texte, traduction et annotation* (SC 31; Paris 1952); *livres V–VII* (SC 41; Paris 1955); *livres VIII–X* (SC 55; Paris 1958). My quotations from *H.E.* are according to the translation of J.E.L. Oulton in the Loeb Classical Library 265, but with some variations.

15 I.A. Heikel (ed.), *Eusebius Werke I. Über das Leben Constantins, Constantins Rede an die Heilige Versammlung, Tricennatsrede an Constantin* (GCS 7; Berlin 1902), 195–259. Quotations from *Laus Constantini* are (with slight changes) taken from the translation of H.A. Drake, *In Praise of Constantine: A Historical Study and new Translation of Eusebius' Tricennial Orations* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1976).

16 F. Winkelmann (ed.), *Eusebius, Werke I,1. Über das Leben des Kaisers Konstantin* (GCS, Berlin 1975). A. Cameron and S.G. Hall, *Eusebius: Life of Constantine: Introduction, translation and commentary* (Oxford 1999). Quotations from the *Vita Constantini* are mostly taken from their translation, sometimes slightly modified. Two German translations were published in 2007 by P. Dräger, *Über das Leben des glückseligen Kaisers Konstantin (De vita Constantini) Griechisch/Deutsch* (Oberhaid 2007) and by B. Bleckmann and H. Schneider, *Eusebius von Caesarea, De vita Constantini, Über das Leben Konstantins, Griechisch/Deutsch* (FC 83; Turnhout 2007). Recently an Italian translation was published by L. Franco (ed.), *Eusebio di Cesarea. Vita di Constantino. Testo greco a fronte* (Classici greci e latini; Rizzoli 2009).

17 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 1, 7.

nearby that several Christians from Caesarea had died as martyrs.¹⁸ Because of the impression which the dawn of the new age had made on Christians like Eusebius, a sympathetic attitude to Constantine is psychologically quite understandable.¹⁹

Besides, we hear him say that the events are the fulfilment of divine prophecies.²⁰ History is history of salvation. By God's providence the events have a special function and are directed to a certain goal. After the Fall, evil had come into the world, because people were darkened in their understanding and no longer had any knowledge of God's intentions. But beginning with Abraham God has revealed Himself frequently by the Word, the Logos, until the Word became flesh. Through the laws of Moses and by the insight which legislators and philosophers received from God, the world has gradually been civilized.²¹ And when the time was ripe for it, the *pax romana* arrived and under emperor Augustus peace reigned in the whole of the Roman empire. Eusebius ascribes great significance to this empire. It stemmed the tide of chaos. It united nations and formed an empire, in which the best conditions were created for the coming of Christ, the preaching of the Gospel and the foundation of the Church.²² Because she has been founded by the Son of God the history of the Church is not a painful struggle for recognition, but a success-story. History runs from the first provisional revelations of the Word via the Christianization of the empire to His final supremacy on earth. From this point of view a new phase of history starts with the coming of a Christian emperor.²³ To emphasize this Eusebius selects and interprets the events, which he incorporates in his *Church History*.²⁴

In his speech, delivered in 335CE on the thirtieth anniversary of Constantine's imperial reign, Eusebius is euphoric about this emperor, 'who has modelled himself after the archetypical form of the Supreme Sovereign, whose thoughts mirror its virtuous rays, by which he has been made perfectly wise, good, just, courageous, pious and God-loving. Truly, therefore, is only this man

18 See his writing *On the martyrs of Palestine* (SC 55).

19 See K. Aland, 'Kaiser und Kirche von Konstantin bis Byzanz', in Ruhbach, *Kirche*, 42–73, esp. 69; W. Schneemelcher, 'Kirche und Staat im 4. Jahrhundert', in *ibidem*, 122–148, esp. 133–134; Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, 28–29.

20 See also Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* I, 4, 1 (SC 206) and J. Sirinelli, *Les vues historiques d'Eusèbe de Césarée durant la période prénicéenne* (Dakar 1961), 367–373.

21 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* I, 2, 17–23; Sirinelli, *Vues historiques*, 208–239.

22 Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* I, 4, 1–6 (with commentary, SC 206, 246–251); *Demonstratio evangelica* III, 7, 30–35 (GCS 23); Sirinelli, *Vues historiques*, 239–346; 390–411.

23 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 1, 7–8.

24 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* III, 59, 4–5 declares that he selects.

a philosopher-king.²⁵ And shortly afterwards he calls him 'the image of the One Ruler of All', who by 'imitating his Saviour, and knowing only how to save, even saved the godless, to teach them to live piously'.²⁶

When Constantine dies in 337 CE, probably Eusebius has already started his *Vita Constantini*.²⁷ It is not a historical-critical biography, but it shows the features of an encomium as well as of a hagiography. But it has also an apologetic purpose. It shows that Constantine carried out God's plan. Moreover, Eusebius has the intention to hold a mirror up to the face of Constantine's sons to fill in the Christian emperorship as their father did.²⁸ He felt uneasy about that, and it describes more an ideal than reality, when he writes at the beginning: 'On earth I perceive his own sons like new lamps filling the whole with his radiance, and himself powerfully alive and directing the whole government of affairs more firmly than before, as he is multiplied in the succession of his sons.'²⁹ However, this succession was accompanied by quite a lot of bloodshed, in which his nephew Dalmatius, who by Constantine was appointed as fourth Caesar in 335 CE, and eight other members of the family were eliminated. Although Constantius II was not directly involved in this 'cleansing', he was so, as he did not resist.³⁰

3 The Way of Thinking of Eusebius and Constantine

If we want to characterize the way of thinking of Eusebius and Constantine, we have to deal in Eusebius' case with a Christian who is familiar with the Roman culture and implicitly also with the traditional Roman imperial cul-

25 Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* V, 4. Cp. Plato, *Respublica* 473C–E, who advances the thesis that a state only goes well, when the king is a philosopher or a philosopher king. See also N.H. Baynes, *Byzantine Studies and other Essays* (London 1955), 168–172 about 'the political philosophy of the Christian Empire' in the *Tricennalia*.

26 Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* VII, 12.

27 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 28, 1.

28 The force of an example, the *auctoritas*, plays an important part in Roman historiography, see: V. Pöschl, 'Die römische Auffassung der Geschichte', in J.M. Alonso-Núñez (ed.), *Geschichtsbild und Geschichtsdenken im Altertum* (Darmstadt 1991), 177–199, esp. 190–191.

29 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 1, 3; cp. IV, 68, 2; 72. Cameron and Hall, *Eusebius: Life of Constantine*, 23 speak about 'tendentious fiction about the sons of Constantine' in IV, 51–52; 54; 68.

30 H. Bellen, *Grundzüge der Römischen Geschichte* III. *Die Spätantike von Constantin bis Justinian* (Darmstadt 2003), 53; Barnes, *Constantine* (1981), 267.

ture. It is the same with Constantine, but perhaps in reverse order. First of all he was familiar with the Roman imperial culture and secondly he was also a Christian. It is a problem if and how these two worlds can be brought together. In the Gospel already are sayings of Jesus about the attitude towards the emperor ('Then pay Caesar what is due to Caesar, and pay God what is due to God'—Matt 22:21 and parallels; see also Rom 13:1–7; Titus 3:1; 1Pet 2:13–14, 17), but there is no definite idea about a Christian emperorship.³¹ So it goes without saying that they thought in terms of the traditional Roman emperorship.

4 A New Augustus

The lustre of that emperorship had considerably faded in the turbulent third century. Eusebius and Constantine speak with certain nostalgia about the good old days. Eusebius reproaches Licinius that he 'criminally annulled long established good and wise laws of Rome and substituted foreign ones of harsh effect'.³² After the victory of Constantine over Licinius, Eusebius concludes that 'the whole Roman dominion was joined together, the peoples of the east being united with the other half', and the emperor 'brought under his control one Roman empire united as of old'.³³ He brought to the barbarians the Roman liberty,³⁴ and he succeeded in bringing happiness³⁵ and peace to all mankind.³⁶ Thus finally, all nations of the world were steered by a single pilot, with none any longer obstructing Roman rule.³⁷ In these last remarks we recognize the old Roman claims of world domination.³⁸ The central ideas in these pronouncements upon the Roman empire, in short, are: civilization, unity and universalism.

Constantine expresses himself in the same way. After his victory over Maxentius at the Pons Milvius he had engraved this inscription on a statue in Rome: 'I saved and delivered your city from the yoke of the tyrant; and moreover I freed

31 K.M. Girardet, *Die Konstantinische Wende. Voraussetzungen und geistige Grundlagen der Religionspolitik Konstantins des Grossen* (Darmstadt 2006), 81.

32 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 55, 1; *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 8, 12.

33 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* II, 19, 1–2; *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 9, 6.

34 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV, 6.

35 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV, 2.

36 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 8, 1.

37 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV, 14, 1.

38 Girardet, *Konstantinische Wende*, 111.

and restored to their ancient fame and splendour both the senate and the people of the Romans.³⁹ Elsewhere he remarks that he has restored justice⁴⁰ and peace.⁴¹

As with Augustus a new age had started, so now with Constantine also a new age has begun. He himself was also convinced of it, for in a letter to the Church of Nicomedia (325 CE) he writes that he is very pleased with the renovation of the world. 'It is really amazing to bring as many peoples to unanimity, who shortly before, as it is said, did not know God at all.'⁴² Comparisons between Constantine and Augustus were already made in his time.⁴³ However, Constantine even excels Augustus. 'For his like has never been recorded from the beginning of time until our day', Eusebius says.⁴⁴ In his eulogy on the thirty years jubilee of Constantine he says that Constantine really deserves the title of emperor because of his divine virtues according to the standards of the heavenly kingdom. Those who do not have these virtues will not hold the title of sovereign with true reason.⁴⁵ God's reward for the true emperor is that He lengthens his rule.⁴⁶

5 State and Religion

5.1 *The Pax Deorum*

Of old state and religion were closely related in the Roman empire. Religion was not a private affair, but was directed towards the common interest. It was important to maintain the *pax deorum*, which was characterized by the idea

39 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX, 9, 11; *Vita Constantini* I, 40.

40 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV, 9.

41 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV, 12; cp. IV, 10, 4; 45, 2; *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 5, 8.

42 In Athanasius, *De decretis Nicaenae synodi* 41, 7 (AW II, 44). See also W. Ullmann, 'The Constitutional Significance of Constantine the Great's Settlement', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 27 (1976), 1–16.

43 Eumenius, *Panegyricus* 6, 21 (PL 8, 637–638). See Barnes, *Constantine* (1981), 36; Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, 73. H. Lietzmann, *Geschichte der Alten Kirche* (Berlin 1961³) III, 134–136 points out that Augustus already had the intention to found a new capital of the empire in the East and links up the consecration of the *Ara pacis* by Augustus and of the Church of Irene by Constantine. Bellen, *Grundzüge* III, 46 finds a connection between the epoch-making character of the *novae leges* of Constantine (*Panegyrici Latini* 4, 38) and the new laws of Augustus (*Res gestae divi Augusti* 8, 5).

44 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV, 75.

45 Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* V, 2–4; cp. *Vita Constantini* IV, 69, 1.

46 Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* III, 1.

of *do ut des*.⁴⁷ If the inhabitants of the empire perform their duties faithfully and observe the rites strictly, they will placate the gods and prosperity will be their lot. For their part these *beneficia* demand that one fulfils his obligations, *officia*.⁴⁸

From this point of view emperor Constantine writes in a letter to the African proconsul Anullinus in 313 CE that 'from many facts it appears that the setting at naught of divine worship ... has brought great dangers upon public affairs, and that its lawful restoration and preservation have bestowed the greatest good fortune on the Roman name and singular prosperity on all the affairs of mankind'.⁴⁹ At the same time Constantine and Licinius decide in Milan, that it is necessary in view of the common interest, 'to grant both to the Christians and to all the free choice of following whatever form of worship they pleased, to the intent that all the divine and heavenly powers that be might be favourable to us and all those living under our authority'.⁵⁰ 'For by this method, as we have also said before, the divine care for us, which we have already experienced in many matters, will remain steadfast continually'.⁵¹ In this imperial circular letter freedom of religion is also explicitly given to the Christians. The thought behind it is that Christians and non-Christians pray to the same God, whether he is called Apollo, Sol or Christ.⁵² That deity is often denoted in general terms such as 'the highest divinity' (*summa divinitas*), 'the God who is over all', 'the God who transcends the universe' etc.

About this decision of both emperors Eusebius writes: 'When they had made it their very first action to purge the world of enmity against God, conscious of the good things that He had bestowed upon them, they displayed their love of virtue and of God, their piety and gratitude towards the Deity, by

47 E. Lehmeier and G. Gottlieb, 'Kaiser Konstantin und die Kirche', in H. Schlange-Schönningen (ed.), *Konstantin und das Christentum* (Darmstadt 2007), 150–170, esp. 153–154; Girardet, *Konstantinische Wende*, 81, 86.

48 So the pagan emperor Maximinus Daia writes to the inhabitants of Tyre, 'that it is salutary to draw nigh to the worship and sacred rites of the immortal gods with due reverence'. Because through this piety, through the sacrifices and veneration there is peace in all safety and quiet, the earth produces fruits and wars have disappeared (Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX, 7, 7–11). See also Girardet, *Konstantinische Wende*, 78–79.

49 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 7, 1.

50 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 5, 1–5; Lactantius, *De morte persecutorum* 48, 2–3 (SC 39).

51 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 5, 13; Lactantius, *De morte persecutorum* 48, 11 (SC 39).

52 At the end of his life Galerius for instance adopts also a mild attitude towards the Christians and says that the Christians, too, must pray to their God for the well-being of the emperor, the state and themselves (Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* VIII, 17, 10).

their enactment on behalf of the Christians.⁵³ Constantly Eusebius repeats his remark that the honouring of God is rewarded, but that his opponents can expect a terrible end,⁵⁴ a thought we often find also in the official documents of Constantine.⁵⁵ Eusebius speaks in this respect about ‘the scales of justice’.⁵⁶ So Galerius and Maximinus Daia are punished by God, because they had persecuted the Christians.⁵⁷ But how different it is with those who serve God. At the end of his *Vita* Eusebius writes: ‘Having shown these things to our very eyes in the case of Constantine, who alone in all time was transparently displayed as a Christian, God who is over all exhibited how great was the difference for him between those who have seen fit to worship him and his Christ and those who choose the opposite. They, by setting out to attack his church, made him their own enemy and adversary.’⁵⁸ And when God has helped Constantine, he responds to these *beneficia* by supporting the churches, the poor, orphans and widows and so he discharges his *officium*.⁵⁹

5.2 *The Pontifex Maximus*

Another example of the narrow relationship between state and religion is that since Augustus the title *Pontifex Maximus* was connected with the emperorship. The *Pontifex Maximus* had the supreme control over religion. Until 379 CE Christian emperors also bore this title.⁶⁰ That religion falls within constitutional law, the lawyer Ulpianus, at the beginning of the third century, had defined as follows: ‘the constitutional law concerns the cult, the priests and the magistrates’.⁶¹ It is remarkable that he mentions religion first. First of all the

53 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX, 11, 8.

54 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 3, 3; cp. 5, 1; 42, 1.

55 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* II, 24, 2–3; 25–27; IV, 11, 1–12; 12.

56 Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* IX, 19; cp. *Historia ecclesiastica* IX, 7, 2: ‘the divine justice ... with its sleepless hatred of the evil in wicked men’.

57 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 56, 2–57, 3; 58, 1–59, 1.

58 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV, 74.

59 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 42, 1–43, 3. See K.M. Girardet, ‘Der Vorsitzende des Konzils von Nicaea (325)—Kaiser Konstantin d. Gr.’, in Schlange-Schöninghen, *Konstantin*, 171–203, esp. 176; Girardet, *Konstantinische Wende*, 78–79.

60 Emperor Gratianus laid down this title, perhaps urged by his co-emperor Theodosius. See: Zosimus, *Historia nova* IV, 36, 3–5 (ed. F. Paschoud) and W. Ensslin, *Die Religionspolitik des Kaisers Theodosius d. Gr.* (München 1953), 9–10. According to Ensslin it happened in 379. Paschoud in a note ad loc. declares himself in favour of the year 376.

61 Ulpianus, *Digesta* I, 1, 1, 2: “*publicum ius in sacris, in sacerdotibus, in magistratibus consistit*” in P. Krueger and T. Mommsen, *Corpus Iuris Civilis* 1. *Institutiones—Digesta* (Berlin 1882³), 1.

point is to ensure the *pax deorum*.⁶² Constantine as a Roman emperor also bore the title *Pontifex Maximus*.⁶³ His responsibility for the religion extended over both the old heathen and the Christian religion, since the last one had been acknowledged as *religio licita* and as a *corpus* in a juridical sense.⁶⁴ Although the public practice of the old rites remains permitted, Constantine issues several restrictive measures.⁶⁵ Therefore it is not permitted that *haruspices* practise their profession in private houses.⁶⁶ Evidently this ban had a political background: Constantine was afraid that they on the basis of their divination might support revolutionary movements.⁶⁷ However, the terminology he uses also makes clear that Constantine distances himself from this 'superstition', this 'ancient practice' (*praeterita usurpatio*).⁶⁸ And the more he feels a bond with the Christian faith, the more he also feels responsible for the Church.

6 Divine Legitimization

Dreams and visions in which the deity appeared unto Constantine gave content and direction to his life. After a manifestation of Apollo he has visions and dreams in which the Christian God appears to him.⁶⁹ What exactly occurred and how—in antiquity there are no less than four versions—remains sub-

62 Girardet, *Konstantinische Wende*, 86–92.

63 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* VIII, 17, 3.

64 Ullmann, 'The Constitutional Significance', 3. The legal term *corpus* for the Church is used in an ordinance of Constantine and Licinius from 313; Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 5, 9–12; Lactantius, *De morte persecutorum* 48, 7–10 (SC 39). See also: A. Ehrhardt, 'Constantin d. Gr. Religionspolitik und Gesetzgebung', in: Kraft (ed.), *Konstantin der Grosse*, 388–456, esp. 436–437.

65 Opinions differ on the import of Constantine's measures against pagan worship. See: Cameron and Hall, *Eusebius: Life of Constantine* 242–244; Girardet, *Konstantinische Wende* 121–132; T. Barnes, *Constantine. Dynasty, Religion and Power in the Later Roman Empire* (Chichester 2011), 109–111.

66 *Codex Theodosianus* IX, 16, 1 (February 1st, 319); IX, 16, 2 (May 15th, 319) (SC 531) and XVI, 10, 1 (December 17th, 320/1) (SC 497).

67 P. Barceló, 'Constantins Visionen: Zwischen Apollo und Christus', in Schlange-Schöningen, *Konstantin*, 133–149, esp. 144.

68 H. Dörries, *Das Selbstzeugnis Kaiser Konstantins* (Abhandlungen der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen—Philologisch-historische Klasse 3, 34; Göttingen 1954), 329–351, esp. 336–337.

69 The *Panegyricus* of Eumenius (PL 8, 619–640) from 310 tells about the vision of Apollo in chapter 21.

ject of discussion, although Eusebius asserts that he has the correct information, because Constantine himself had related it to him.⁷⁰ In antiquity visions and manifestations of the deity to rulers are important to legitimize their actions.⁷¹ So it must become clear, according to Eusebius (and Constantine himself), that Constantine does not act on his own authority, but as a servant of God.

He has been chosen for that by God. Already before the army chose him, he was proclaimed emperor by God, Eusebius says.⁷² Whereas other office holders are chosen by men, Constantine has been chosen by God to be sovereign.⁷³ 'For the God over all had given him sovereignty over things on earth.'⁷⁴ God repeatedly 'proved to be Constantine's Friend and Protector and Guardian'.⁷⁵ Constantine himself delights in being 'the servant of the Lord'⁷⁶ and in God making use of him to proffer healing to the eastern provinces, which had much suffered under his predecessors.⁷⁷

7 One God, One Emperor

When Constantine became an absolute sovereign in 324 CE, it was according to Eusebius a meaningful event, not only because in antiquity others also think that 'monarchy excels all other kinds of constitution',⁷⁸ but especially because monarchy fits in the monotheistic character of Christianity. With the heathen

70 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 28, 1. Barnes, *Constantine* (2011), 74–80 holds the view that Constantine saw a solar halo in 310 to which he only later gave a Christian interpretation. Kraft, *Kaiser Konstantins religiöse Entwicklung*, 20–27 thinks that the genuineness of the vision is of secondary importance. Constantine himself has told it and 'he wanted anyway to be seen as a recipient of particular revelations'.

71 Barceló, 'Constantins Visionen', 133–149.

72 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* VIII, 13, 14.

73 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 24; cp. *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 4, 60.

74 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV, 29, 4.

75 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 8, 6–8.

76 Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* VII, 12.

77 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* II, 55, 1; cp. 28, 1–2. In III, 1, 1–2, 2 Eusebius describes the difference between the policy of 'the Emperor, dear to God' and of his godless predecessors.

78 Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* III, 6. Homer, *Ilias* II, 204–205 had already said: 'It is not good that many lords reign. Let there be only one, one king.' Plato, *Leges* 693D–E and 701A–C prefers a combination of monarchy and democracy. Aristotle, *Politica* III, 7 (1279a22–b10) mentions monarchy among the good constitutions, but is negative about democracy as 'the power of the people'.

he sees polyarchy, which leads to anarchy. In fact, polyarchy is a reflection of polytheism. Because they are dragged off by innumerable demons, polytheists can not bear the likeness of monarchical authority.⁷⁹ But with the arrival of the Gospel the worship of demons and polyarchy had disappeared. Augustus had already established a monarchy with the Romans.⁸⁰ When Constantine has become an absolute sovereign, he is the image of the one ruler of all.⁸¹ For there is only one God. 'Outfitted in the likeness of the kingdom of heaven, Constantine pilots affairs below with an upward gaze, to steer by the archetypal form and he grows strong in his model of monarchic rule.'⁸²

Constantine grows strong indeed, because 'making him the model of his own monarchical reign God appointed him victor over the whole race of tyrants', Eusebius writes.⁸³ So Constantine started 'to proclaim to all the monarchy of God, and by monarchy himself directing the whole of life under Roman rule'.⁸⁴

In this Christian perception there is only one God and one emperor. And there is also only one empire, a reflection of the one and only heavenly kingdom.⁸⁵

7.1 *The Unity of Cult*

In the conflict around Arius, Constantine writes in a letter: 'My first concern was that the attitude towards the divinity of all the provinces should be united in one consistent view, and my second that I might restore and heal the body of the republic which lay severely wounded.' He is of the opinion that the course of public affairs will do well by this.⁸⁶ He is convinced that peace and prosperity depend on a religious unity, as God wills, and he considers it his mission to strive for that unity. Thereby he can lean on the old Roman idea that the unity of the cult of the gods is important for the prosperity of the empire. As *Pontifex Maximus* the emperor bore responsibility for it. As a Christian Constantine

79 Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* V, 3.

80 Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* III, 6; VII, 12; *Praeparatio evangelica* I, 4, 2–5; V, 1, 2–5.

81 Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* VII, 12.

82 Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* III, 5–6.

83 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 5, 1. In II, 19, 2 he writes: 'And he, famous for every godly virtue, the Emperor Victor (he created this title personally for himself as his most appropriate surname because of the victory which God had given him over all his enemies and foes) took over the east.' See Barnes, *Constantine* (1981), 77 and 326 n. 165. Cp. also *Laus Constantini* VII, 13 and V, 4.

84 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* II, 19, 2.

85 Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* V, 2 en 5.

86 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* II, 65, 1–2.

feels obliged by the missionary order to make all nations disciples of Jesus Christ (Matt 28:18–20). Evangelization is of national interest.

So 'he used imperial addresses to announce his own God openly and boldly', as Eusebius says,⁸⁷ referring also to Christ and to the cross. 'For he continually announced the Christ of God with complete openness to all, in no way concealing the Saviour's title, but rather taking pride in the practice. He made himself quite plain, at one time marking his face with the Saviour's sign, at another proudly delighting in the victorious trophy.'⁸⁸ Therefore Eusebius calls him 'a loud-voiced herald of unerring godliness'⁸⁹ and 'a teacher of true devotion ... that they should know the God who is',⁹⁰ and Constantine considers himself, as he says, as 'the teacher of the knowledge of the most holy God'.⁹¹

8 The Donatist Controversy

However, the religious unity of the empire is not only realized by winning the pagan over to Christianity. Sometimes the unity within the church is also subjected to great pressure. When the Donatist controversy breaks out in North-Africa, Constantine feels responsible, because in his firm belief the divine providence had trusted to him these provinces too.⁹² In the controversy about the validity of the consecration of Caecilianus as bishop of Carthage, the Donatists appeal to the emperor via the proconsul Anullinus. Constantine decides that Miltiades, bishop of Rome, must convene bishops as members of a court of arbitration to handle the case (313 CE).⁹³ Their judgment is unfavourable to the Donatists, who appeal again. Thereupon Constantine himself convenes a synod in Arles, which passes the same judgment (314 CE).⁹⁴ After that the Donatists ask the emperor himself to give a decision on this case. He refers, however, to the pronouncements of the synods and says: 'They demand my judgment,

87 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 8, 4; III, 58, 2–4.

88 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* III, 2, 2; IV, 75.

89 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 4.

90 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 5, 2; cp. 6; IV, 18, 1; 19.

91 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV, 9. As examples Eusebius gives in *Vita Constantini* II, 24–42 a letter to the inhabitants of the province of Palestine and in II, 48–60 a letter to the inhabitants of the East. Examples of the subjects, on which Constantine delivered his speeches, he enumerates in IV, 29.

92 Constantine speaks often about God as 'the Providence'.

93 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 5, 18–20.

94 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*. X, 5, 21–24.

while I myself expect Christ's judgment! For I say, as it really is, that the judgment of the priests has to be seen as if the Lord himself sentences and passes pronouncement.'⁹⁵ Three aspects attract attention. First, the Donatists turn to the emperor for a verdict in their religious dispute. Secondly, Constantine did organize that two synods of bishops were held about it, but he leaves the responsibility to these ecclesiastical bodies, to which he assigns divine authority.⁹⁶ Thirdly, hardly anybody raises an objection to this procedure. That means: everyone realizes that the emperor as *Pontifex Maximus* has also the *ius circa sacra*.⁹⁷ Eusebius even describes it as follows: 'To the Church of God he paid particular personal attention. When some were at variance with each other in various places, like a universal bishop appointed by God he convoked councils of the ministers of God.'⁹⁸

9 The Arian Controversy

In the Arian controversy the unity of the church is at stake too. Not only do the bishops oppose each other, but also the people get divided and in the theatres the orthodox faith is scoffed at.⁹⁹ As he writes to both sides, it is of great importance to Constantine to restore the unity of the empire.¹⁰⁰ Repeatedly he tries to play down the theological controversy. 'The cause was

95 Optatus, *Appendix V*, 32b (ed. C. Ziwsa; CSEL 26, 209).

96 Eusebius relates that in the case of the questionable episcopal consecration at Antioch in 327 Constantine thinks it important that in the Church one adheres to the ecclesiastical rules and appointments (*Vita Constantini* III, 59, 5; 60, 5–6; 61, 1–3; 62, 2–3).

97 See A. Kartaschow, 'Die Entstehung der kaiserlichen Synodalgewalt unter Konstantin dem Grossen, ihre theologische Begründung und ihre kirchliche Rezeption', in Ruhbach, *Kirche*, 149–167, esp. 154; E. Wolf, 'Zur Entstehung der kaiserlichen Synodalgewalt, zu ihrer theologischen Begründung und kirchlichen Rezeption', *ibidem*, 168–186, esp. 173–174; Schneemelcher, 'Kirche und Staat', 134–135; Lehmeier and Gottlieb, 'Konstantin und die Kirche', 161; K. Piepenbrink, 'Konstantin der Grosse—wendet sich nicht dem Christentum zu', in Schlange-Schöninggen, *Konstantin*, 245–261, esp. 256; Ullmann, 'Constitutional Significance', 4; Leithart, *Defending Constantine* 157. For more details about the Donatist controversy and the role of Constantine in this, see: Lietzmann, *Geschichte* III, 68–79; Barnes, *Constantine* (1981), 54–61; Lehmeier and Gottlieb, 'Konstantin und die Kirche', 155–163; K. Piepenbrink, *Konstantin der Grosse und seine Zeit* (Darmstadt 2002), 88–90; Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, 153–163.

98 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 44, 1–2.

99 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* II, 61, 2–5.

100 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* II, 65, 1. The whole letter is in II, 64–72.

exposed as extremely trivial', he writes.¹⁰¹ The theological discussion must not be carried on in public, or there is a chance of blasphemy and schism in his view.¹⁰² Eusebius, however, realized that the problem 'was too great a matter to be dealt with by a letter'.¹⁰³ It remains a question open to discussion whether it was the emperor's strategy to disparage the controversy or that he, as some people think, had not the faintest understanding concerning theological problems.¹⁰⁴ When Constantine himself also had established that the letter did not help, he convoked a ecumenical synod of more than 250 bishops in Nicea, which Eusebius describes as a second Pentecost.¹⁰⁵ The opening speech was held by Eusebius of Nicomedia, whereupon Constantine held a speech and emphasized that unanimity was in danger.¹⁰⁶ 'To me internal division in the Church of God is graver than any war or fierce battle, and these things appear to cause more pain than secular affairs', he says.¹⁰⁷ About the further course of the synod Eusebius is remarkably reticent. Probably this has to do with the fact that he himself has played a rather dubious part in it.¹⁰⁸ But he states that Constantine during the synod constantly tried to bring together the contending parties and urged them to unity.¹⁰⁹ The emperor impressed on everybody to keep peace with each other in his farewell address.¹¹⁰ Constantine himself is convinced that the council of Nicea has become a success,¹¹¹ and

101 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* II, 68, 2; 70; 71, 1, 3, 5, 6, 7.

102 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* II, 69, 1–3; 71, 7.

103 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* II, 73.

104 The last point of view in H. Rahner, *Kirche und Staat im frühen Christentum* (München 1961), 82–84 and Ø. Norderval, 'The Emperor Constantine and Arius: Unity in the Church and Unity in the Empire', *Studia Theologica* 42 (1988), 113–150, esp. 115, 121, 143. Barnes, *Constantine* (1981), 213 thinks that Constantine departs from the idea that divergent opinions must be possible within the Church.

105 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* III, 5, 3–8.

106 Opinions differ on the question if Constantine was the chairman of the council. Baynes, 'Constantine the Great', 21, Piepenbrink, *Konstantin der Grosse*, 93, and Girardet, 'Der Vorsitzende', 171–203 think so. The last named opposes the view that Ossius was chairman (186–191), while Barnes, *Constantine* (1981), 215 and Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, 169 just hold this view.

107 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* III, 11–12.

108 See Ruhbach, 'Politische Theologie', 242; H. Freiherr von Campenhausen, *Griechische Kirchenväter* (Stuttgart 1967⁴), 69–70.

109 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* III, 13.

110 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* III, 21, 1–4.

111 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* III, 17: Constantine in a letter to the churches: '... so that nothing remained to cause further difference of opinion or dispute about faith'.

Eusebius ends his description thus saying: 'At last prevailed among them all a unanimity, which had been arrived at in the emperor's presence.'¹¹² This shows that for Eusebius, too, the intention of the council of Nicea was to restore unity. However, he veils himself in silence about the further course of events around Arius, which gives a confused picture. The opponents of Nicea are excommunicated by the Church and removed from their bishops' see by the state and banished.¹¹³ The latter applies also to Arius. But after two years he is restored to favour and in 335 CE Athanasius, who was loyal to Nicea, is banished!¹¹⁴ Shortly after, at the dedication of the church of the holy sepulchre, Eusebius trumpets forth Constantine's praises, because the goal has been achieved: there is one God, one empire, one emperor.¹¹⁵ But he distorts the image, just as Constantine did, who pretended that his intervention in the Donatist controversy in Africa had been successful.¹¹⁶ The only conclusion, which can be drawn, is Barnes': 'Constantine failed to bring unity to the eastern Church'.¹¹⁷

10 Ideal or Reality?

Whoever compares the idealized picture of Constantine, which Eusebius paints, with the description of Zosimus or the Anonymus Valesianus,¹¹⁸ sees also another aspect of this emperor. Zosimus describes how Constantine has killed his son Crispus and his wife Fausta, incidents which Eusebius does not mention.¹¹⁹ Instead he writes in his *Church History* that Crispus 'was most dear

¹¹² Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* III, 21, 4.

¹¹³ Lietzmann, *Geschichte* III, 111.

¹¹⁴ Rahner, *Kirche und Staat*, 83–84; Norderval, 'The Emperor Constantine', 138–142.

¹¹⁵ Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* XVI, 3–4; 6–8.

¹¹⁶ Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* II, 65, 2–66. See also Cameron and Hall, *Eusebius: Life of Constantine*, 250–251 about Constantine's intervention 'which had in fact reached a stalemate'.

¹¹⁷ Barnes, *Constantine* (1981), 244. See also Norderval, 'The Emperor Constantine', 114–115. About the Arian controversy see further Lietzmann, *Geschichte* III, 80–125; Schneemelcher, 'Kirche und Staat', 131–134; Barnes, *Constantine* (1981), 202–244; Norderval, 'The Emperor Constantine', 113–150; Piepenbrink, *Konstantin der Grosse*, 91–96; Bellen, *Grundzüge* III, 33–35; Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, 164–175.

¹¹⁸ The anonymus author of the writing *Origo Constantini* (ed. I. König) is referred to as the Anonymus Valesianus after the first publisher Henri de Valois (1603–1678).

¹¹⁹ Zosimus, *Historia nova* II, 29 (ed. F. Paschoud). See about the reasons for this murder: Piepenbrink, *Konstantin der Grosse*, 55 and Leithart, *Defending Constantine*, 227–

to God and in all respects like unto his father'.¹²⁰ Shortly before he characterized him as 'his most human son'.¹²¹ The Anonymus relates the military activities which Constantine has started against the Sarmatians, of whom many were killed.¹²² Licinius in his conflict with Constantine is said to have lost 20,000 troops at Cibalae (Vinkovci)¹²³ and 25,000 at Chrysopolis (Skutari).¹²⁴ In the war against the Goths, according to the author, 100,000 of them died of war, hunger or cold.¹²⁵ In this respect Eusebius writes at the beginning of his *Vita*: 'The greatest, the imperial parts of the history of the Thrice-blessed, his encounters and battles in war, his valiant deeds and victories and routing of enemies, and how many triumphs he won ... I intend to omit. My purpose in the present work is to put into words and write down what relates to the life which is dear to God.'¹²⁶ However, shortly before he did allude to Constantine's military actions, writing that 'God was close at hand to make him Lord and Despot, the only Conqueror among the Emperors of all time to remain Irresistible and Unconquered, Ever-conquering and always brilliant with triumphs over enemies ..., so truly pious and complete in happiness, that with utter ease he obtained the authority over more nations than those before him.'¹²⁷ When he has mentioned a number of these subjected peoples (Britons, Scythians, Blemmyes, Aethiopians), he concludes with: 'He shone with beams of the light of true religion to the ends of the whole inhabited world, as far as the outermost inhabitants of India and those who live round the rim of the whole terrestrial globe.'¹²⁸ Eusebius can not deny that Constantine has waged wars and subjected peoples just like other rulers. But his comment that usually 'he won his victories over his opponents without the shedding of blood' is of a childlike naïveté.¹²⁹

230. Barnes, *Constantine* (2011), 144–150 wonders if it was murder or if Crispus was formally tried by his father and then executed.

120 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 9, 6.

121 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 9, 4.

122 Anonymus Valesianus, *Origo Constantini* II (3) (ed. I. König).

123 Anonymus Valesianus, *Origo Constantini* V (16).

124 Anonymus Valesianus, *Origo Constantini* V (27).

125 Anonymus Valesianus, *Origo Constantini* VI (31). The number of the victims is presumably estimated too high.

126 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 11, 1.

127 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 6.

128 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 8, 1–4; cp. II, 28, 2; IV, 50.

129 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV, 53.

11 The Religious Framework

Eusebius, however, puts his wars in a religious framework. God sided with Constantine and gave him the victory.¹³⁰ His wars are interpreted by Eusebius as religious wars. This emperor is an instrument of God in his struggle against the demons.¹³¹ As a monarch he fights for the Christian monotheism and against polytheism.

In the competition between Constantine and Licinius, Eusebius portrays Licinius as the hater of God, who not only fights against Constantine, but also against God.¹³² He compares him with the Pharaoh of Egypt, whose heart was hardened by God (Exod 9:12).¹³³ But Constantine he compares with Moses.¹³⁴ When Maxentius drowns at the Pons Milvius, he suffered the same fate as the Pharaoh who drowned with his army in the Red Sea. So Constantine can sing with Moses: 'The horse and its rider He has hurled into the sea. The Lord is my refuge and my defence, He has shown Himself my deliverer' (Exod 15:1–2).¹³⁵ On other points also he compares Constantine with Moses. Just as Moses spent his youth at the court of the Pharaoh, so the young Constantine stayed at the court of Diocletian.¹³⁶ When he did not feel safe there any longer, he fled like Moses.¹³⁷ As Moses had a tent outside the camp (Exod 33:7), so Constantine retired to his tent to pray before the battle started.¹³⁸ Although Eusebius does not mention the comparison explicitly: just like unto Moses God also appeared unto Constantine.¹³⁹ When Eusebius says that Constantine 'plundered' the precious materials of the heathen idols, he may have thought of the Israelites, who during the exodus from Egypt 'plundered' the Egyptians of their valuables (Exod 12:35–36).¹⁴⁰ Besides, Eusebius emphasizes that Constantine was also a

130 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV, 5–6.

131 Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* VII, 2–6; VIII, 1–8; cp. *Vita Constantini* III, 54–57.

132 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* X, 8, 2–11; 9, 2–4. In *Vita Constantini* I, 48–II, 18 Eusebius gives a detailed justification of Constantine's action against Licinius.

133 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* II, 11, 2.

134 See M.J. Hollerich, 'The Comparison of Moses and Constantine in Eusebius of Caesarea's Life of Constantine', in E.A. Livingstone (ed.), *Studia Patristica* 19 (Leuven 1989), 80–85; C. Rapp, 'Imperial Ideology in the Making: Eusebius of Caesarea on Constantine as "Bishop"', *Journal of Theological Studies*, N.S. 49 (1998), 685–695.

135 Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica* IX, 9, 4–9; *Vita Constantini* I, 38–39, 1.

136 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 12; 19, 1.

137 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 20, 2.

138 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* II, 12, 1; 14, 1.

139 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 47, 3.

140 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* III, 54, 7.

legislator, a position he had in common with Moses. He was the inspiration of *novae leges* by transforming old laws to a more hallowed state, he says.¹⁴¹ In the Old Testament Moses is also called a prophet.¹⁴² The Jewish-Hellenistic writings adopt this and Eusebius follows them.¹⁴³ To him Constantine has the characteristics of a prophet too.¹⁴⁴ He is, like Moses, a friend of God,¹⁴⁵ and as God speaks about Moses as ‘my servant’,¹⁴⁶ so Constantine is also a servant of God, who carries out his plans.¹⁴⁷ Moses had been called to his duty by a divine sign (Exod 3:1–14; Acts 7:30–35) and so Constantine got his task by means of a divine sign.¹⁴⁸ Cameron and Hall put it in a nutshell: ‘The whole of Constantine’s life as a ruler of God’s people is now to be read in terms of the figure of Moses.’¹⁴⁹ In both cases policy and spiritual leadership go hand in hand. Moses is the type, who is surpassed yet by the antitype Constantine.¹⁵⁰ Through his deeds Constantine made the history of Moses, which by some was considered to be a myth, believable.¹⁵¹ And so God confirmed his own words.¹⁵²

12 Conclusion

We can say that Eusebius’ view on Emperor Constantine and his policy has developed along two lines.

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- 141 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* IV, 26, 1–27, 3. Barnes, *Constantine* (2011), 131–140 agrees that “Constantine introduced significant changes in Roman law in order to refashion Roman society in a Christian direction ... without in any way challenging the existing legal framework” (131).
 - 142 Deut 18:15–18; Acts 3:22; 7:37.
 - 143 Philo, *De vita Mosis* II, 5; 188; 190 (LCL 289); *De decalogo* 18 (LCL 320); *De praemiis* 53; 55–56 (LCL 341); Aristoboulos, cited by Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* VIII, 10, 4 and Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 12, 1; II, 12, 1.
 - 144 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* II, 61, 1; IV, 30, 2.
 - 145 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 3, 4; 38, 2; 52; cp. Exod 33:11.
 - 146 Num 12:7–8 (LXX); cp. Hebr 3:5. Eusebius also calls Moses the servant of God: *Historia ecclesiastica* IX, 9, 4–9; *Vita Constantini* I, 12, 2; 38, 5; 39, 1.
 - 147 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 5, 2–6; 47, 2–3; II, 2, 3; IV, 14, 1; 71, 2.
 - 148 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 27–29. See: Cameron and Hall, *Eusebius: Life of Constantine*, 38–39.
 - 149 Cameron and Hall, *Eusebius: Life of Constantine*, 36.
 - 150 In Heb 3:1–6 Moses is the type, which is surpassed by the antitype Christ.
 - 151 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 38, 1–4.
 - 152 Eusebius, *Vita Constantini* I, 2, 3–3, 1; 3, 4.

The first one is the line of the traditional Roman understanding of emperorship. The emperor as *Pontifex Maximus* takes care that the *pax deorum* is not disturbed and that the cult is practised in the right way and in unity. When everybody fulfils his *officia*, he receives in turn the *beneficia* from the deity. The ideal emperor, who managed it best, was emperor August. During his reign there was peace and the empire flourished. According to Eusebius, Constantine did not only match him, but in fact surpassed him.

The second line is Eusebius' view on history as history of salvation. Divine Providence determines history. He makes use of men to realize His reign on earth. Constantine had been chosen by God and had received the emperorship from Him. For that reason he enjoyed God's support and his victories were given to him by God. He freed the people from the tyranny of the persecutions. He combined political and religious leadership. Therefore Eusebius sees him as a second Moses, who even surpassed the first one. 'He, like some wise pilot riding on high over the rudder to pursue a direct route, steers by a favourable wind and conveys all under him to a safe and calm anchorage. So God Himself, the Supreme Sovereign, stretches out His right hand to him from above and confirms him victor over every pretender and aggressor, augmenting the sway of his kingdom by long periods of years ...'¹⁵³

153 Eusebius, *Laus Constantini* X, 7.

Avenging Julian. Violence against Christians during the Years 361–363*

Hans C. Teitler

As will be shown in the first part of this article, there is sufficient evidence to reject the opinion that Julian the Apostate (361–363) persecuted the Christians. Nevertheless, it is sometimes argued, even by those who admit this, that the emperor ‘lapsed into violence against them on occasion’. In the second part of this paper I propose to show that at least in two notorious cases the emperor did not do so: I contest the views of those scholars who believe that Julian ordered Christians to be tortured and die a martyr’s death in Ancyra and in Caesarea.¹

1 Chalcedon

Early in June 362 CE Julian and his army left Constantinople in order to travel eastwards in the direction of Antioch on the Orontes—in the Syrian capital Julian intended to prepare the expedition against the Persians which would end in disaster and which would cost him his life. According to some Christian sources the emperor met the old and blind bishop Maris of Chalcedon soon after his departure—Maris was really blind, whereas Chalcedon was often called ‘city of the blind’, because its first inhabitants had chosen the eastern bank of the Bosphorus to found their city instead of the much more favourably situated western shore (where shortly afterwards Byzantium, later called Constantinople, arose). However, Maris’ handicap did not stop him from start-

* Thanks are due to Ines van de Wetering, who corrected my English.

1 Cf. G.W. Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate* (London 1978), 92: ‘Clever and cunning, Julian was now indisputably a persecutor’, and R.J. Penella, ‘Julian the Persecutor in Fifth Century Church Historians’, *The Ancient World* 24 (1993), 31–43 (31): ‘Even if he grew more and more impatient with Christians over the course of his reign, lapsed into violence against them on occasion, and threatened to unleash his anger upon them after returning from his Persian campaign, non-violence towards Christians apparently remained official policy through the whole of his reign.’

ing an argument with the emperor, whom he rebuked for his impiety, apostasy and atheism. Julian contemptuously replied that the bishop's 'Galilaeen God' would never cure him, whereupon Maris responded that he thanked the Lord for having taken away his sight, so that he could not see Julian's impious face.²

Maris' impertinent behaviour had no immediate consequences. Julian left the bishop alone and continued on his way. Zonaras, one of the authors who mention Julian's encounter with Maris, relates the story without comment (Zonaras lived in the twelfth century, but is important because he used sources for his universal history which are lost to us). The fifth-century church historian Sozomen—who, improbably, places Julian's altercation with Maris in Constantinople, not in Chalcedon—states that Julian deliberately reacted in this way, because he thought that paganism would be better promoted by a policy of leniency vis-à-vis the Christians than by punishment. Sozomen's contemporary Socrates, who also wrote an ecclesiastical history, goes into much greater detail about the emperor's behaviour and offers the following explanation: according to him Julian overlooked Maris' boldness at the time, but had his revenge afterwards: 'Julian had observed that those who died as martyrs under the reign of Diocletian were greatly honoured by the Christians, and he knew that many Christians had an urgent desire to become martyrs themselves. Refusing to grant them this pleasure he wreaked his vengeance upon them in

2 For the date of Julian's departure from Constantinople see J. den Boeft, J.W. Drijvers, D. den Hengst, H.C. Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXII* (Groningen 1995), 154–155. Arrival in Chalcedon: Ammianus, 22, 9, 3. Encounter with Maris: Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III, 12, 1–7, Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V, 4, 8–9; Zonaras, *Epitome Historiarum* XII, 12, 27–28 (cf. H.C. Brennecke, *Studien zur Geschichte der Homöer. Der Osten bis zum Ende der homöischen Reichskirche* [Tübingen 1988], 142–143). 'City of the blind': Herodotus, IV, 144; Tacitus, *Annales* XII, 63, 1–2; Plinius, *Naturalis historia* V, 149. 'Galilaeen God': Sozomen aptly adopts the terminology of Julian himself here, who in all his writings except *Ep.* 114, 437d Bidez, where he cites a Christian bishop, calls the Christians 'Galilaeans'; the emperor wanted to stress that the worship of 'the newfangled Galilaeen god' (*illum novum ... deum Galilaeum*, Julianus, *Ep.* 90 Bidez), spread by 'theologizing fishermen' (*theologorum piscatorum*, *ibid.*), was just a religion of a local sect from a distant and uncivilized part of the Empire (cf. John 7:52 ἐκ τῆς Γαλιλαίας προφήτης οὐκ ἐγείρεται). See S. Scicolone, 'Le accezioni dell' appellativo "Galilei" in Giuliano', *Aevum* 56 (1982), 71–80 and S.C. Mimouni, 'Qui sont les Galiléens dans la littérature chrétienne ancienne?', *Proche-Orient Chrétienne* 49 (1999), 53–67 (53). Cf. also P.-L. Malosse, 'Galileans or Gallus? (Julian's Letter to Aetius)', *The Classical Quarterly* 60 (2010), 607–609 and P.-L. Malosse, 'Philostorge, Libanios et Julien: divergences et convergences', in D. Meyer (ed.), *Philostorge et l'historiographie de l'Antiquité tardive* (Collegium Beatus Rhenanus 3; Stuttgart 2011), 203–220 (219–220).

some other way. He eschewed the excessive cruelties which had been practised under Diocletian, but did not altogether abstain from persecution—by persecution I mean any action adopted to disquiet those who put their hopes in Jesus Christ (διωγμὸν δὲ λέγω τὸ ὅπως οὖν ταραττεῖν τοὺς ἡσυχάζοντας τοὺς εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν ἐλπίζοντας). He disturbed the Christians by issuing a law which excluded them from classical education (ἐτάραττε δὲ ὧδε νόμῳ ἐκέλευε Χριστιανούς Ἑλληνικῆς παιδείσεως μὴ μετέχειν).³

Socrates' words are really interesting. The law he refers to is Julian's notorious school law, although its content is not reproduced correctly. It did not, as Socrates alleges, exclude Christians from classical education, but merely tried to prohibit Christian teachers from teaching the classics. Even so, it was a discriminatory and reprehensible measure, which, in the words of the fourth-century pagan historian Ammianus Marcellinus, ought to be consigned to eternal silence (*illud autem erat inclemens obruendum perenni silentio, quod arcebat docere magistros rhetoricos et grammaticos ritus Christiani cultores*). Julian's law is subsumed by Socrates under the heading διωγμός, 'persecution', a word which he uses in a rather pregnant sense, as he himself evidently realized, as is shown by the fact that he deemed it necessary to clarify his terminology ('by persecution I mean any action adopted to disquiet those who put their hopes in Jesus Christ'). Elsewhere in the first three books of his work διωγμός most often has the connotation of 'bloody persecution' and refers to the way in which emperors like Decius and Diocletian acted.⁴

3 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III, 12, 5–7 Hansen.

4 Julian's school law: Julianus, *Epistula* 61c Bidez (I follow those scholars, e.g. Banchich and Matthews, who argue that the letter has no connection with *Codex Theodosianus* XIII, 3, 5 of 17 June 362). The literature on this law is vast: C.J. Henning, *De eerste schoolstrijd tussen Kerk en Staat onder Julianus den Afvallige* (Diss. Nijmegen 1937); B.C. Hardy, 'The Emperor Julian and his School Law', *Church History* 37 (1968), 131–143; S. Pricoco, 'L'editto di Giuliano sui maestri (C. Th. 13,3,5)', *Orpheus* 1 (1980), 348–370; R. Klein, 'Kaiser Julians Rhetoren- und Unterrichtsgesetz', *Römische Quartalschrift für christliche Altertumskunde und für Kirchengeschichte* 76 (1981), 73–94; E. Pack, *Städte und Steuern in der Politik Julians. Untersuchungen zu den Quellen eines Kaiserbildes* (Collection Latomus 194; Brussels 1986), 261–300; E. Dal Covolo, 'La paideia anticristiana dell' imperatore Giuliano. A proposito dell' editto del 17 giugno 362', in S. Felici (ed.), *Crescita dell' uomo nella catechesi dei padri (età postniconica)* (Rome 1987), 73–85; Th. Banchich, 'Julian's School Laws: Cod. Theod. 13,3,5 and Ep. 42', *The Ancient World* 24 (1993), 5–14; A. Tedeschi, 'Sul divieto di insegnamento per i maestri cristiani (Giuliano, ep. 61c Bidez)', *Annali della Facoltà di Lettere e Filosofia di Bari* 39 (1996), 17–36; S. Saracino, 'La politica culturale dell' imperatore Giuliano attraverso il Cod. Theod. XIII 3,5 e l'Ep. 61', *Aevum* 76 (2002), 123–141; J.F. Matthews, *Laying Down the Law: A Study of the Theodosian Code* (New Haven, London 2000), 274–277; E. Germino, *Scuola e cultura nella legislazione di Giuliano l'Apostata*

Socrates explicitly denies that Julian embarked on a cruel persecution like that of Diocletian. In this respect he is certainly right. Admittedly, the emperor was not keen to make life more pleasant for Christians. Apart from the school law there is for instance Julian's decree of 13 March 362 which reversed some measures which his Christian predecessors had taken: from now on Christians—that is, Christian clergymen—were again subject to the financial burdens which members of municipal councils had to bear. And there is Julian's funeral decree of 12 February 363, which, among other things, stipulated that funerals should be carried out only between sunset and sunrise (and not, therefore, in broad daylight, as was customary among Christians). The emperor also gave preferential treatment to cities where pagans were in the majority, and neglected cities where Christians had the upper hand; the latter he never visited, and he refused to receive their embassies or listen to their complaints, while pagan cities were showered with benefactions at the slightest signal. This, at least, was the opinion of the Christian Sozomen. The pagan Libanius, rhetor in Antioch and sympathizer of Julian, depicts the emperor's policy less negatively: if cities had temples still standing, Julian considered them deserving of the greatest kindness, whilst he called cities which had destroyed pagan shrines

(Naples 2004); P. Gemeinhardt, 'Dürfen Christen Lehrer sein? Anspruch und Wirklichkeit im christlichen Bildungsdiskurs der Spätantike', *Jahrbuch für Antike & Christentum* 51 (2008), 25–43, esp. 30–36; J. Stenger, *Hellenische Identität in der Spätantike. Pagane Autoren und ihr Unbehagen an der eigenen Zeit* (Berlin, New York 2009), 101–110. The same misrepresentation of the content of the law in Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III, 16, 1; III, 16, 19, Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V, 18, 1, Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* X, 33 and Theodoret, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III, 8, 1; cf. also Augustine, *De civitate Dei* XVIII, 52: *an ipse* (sc. Iulianus) *non est ecclesiam persecutus, qui christianos liberales litteras docere ac discere vetuit?* Ammianus' comment: XXII, 10, 7, cf. XXV, 4, 20. For δωγγμός in Socrates see e.g. *Historia Ecclesiastica* I, 1, 1 (Diocletian); I, 3, 4; I, 10, 3 (Decius); I, 11, 2 (Diocletian); I, 36, 3 (Decius and Diocletian); II, 27, 7; III, 8, 43. For Socrates on Julian see H. Leppin, *Von Constantin dem Großen zu Theodosius II. Das christliche Kaisertum bei den Kirchenhistorikern Socrates, Sozomenus und Theodoret* (Hypomnemata 110; Göttingen 1996), 72–84; I. Krivouchine, 'L'empereur païen vu par l'historien ecclésiastique: Julien l'Apostat de Socrate', *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik* 47 (1997), 13–24; T. Urbainczyk, *Socrates of Constantinople. Historian of Church and State* (Ann Arbor 1997), 30–31; M. Wallraff, *Der Kirchenhistoriker Sokrates. Untersuchungen zu Geschichtsdarstellung, Methode und Person* (Göttingen 1997), 102–103 ('sein Urteil über den Apostaten [fällt] nicht so negativ aus, wie man es bei einem Christen vermuten könnte', p. 102); D.F. Buck, 'Socrates Scholasticus on Julian the Apostate', *Byzantion* 73 (2003), 301–318 ('Socrates wrote a thoroughly negative account of Julian', p. 317); P. Van Nuffelen, *Un héritage de paix et de piété. Étude sur les histoires ecclésiastiques de Socrate et de Sozomène* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 142; Leuven 2004), 366–367.

polluted; nevertheless, in spite of this annoyance, he offered the inhabitants of such cities a share in the benefits he dispensed, for the reason that they, too, were his subjects.⁵

2 Persecution? The pros and cons

I shall not go into the question as to whether Sozomen or Libanius is right about Julian's policy with respect to the cities. For my purpose it suffices to say that, even if Sozomen's representation were correct, one might conceivably accuse Julian of discrimination with regard to this case as well as to the others which have been mentioned, but not of launching a bloody persecution. The relevant sources and modern scholarly literature sometimes suggest otherwise. In his commentary on the prophet Abacuc Jerome states bluntly that Julian was actually guilty of the shedding of Christian blood (*christianum ... sanguinem fundere*), and that he should be put on a par with the persecutors Maximianus, Valerianus, Decius, Domitianus and Nero, but in his continuation of Eusebius' *Chronicon* the same Jerome formulates his criticism of Julian far more cautiously. He does use the word *persecutio* there, but qualifies the term (as did Socrates with respect to Julian's διωγμός). He adds the adjective

5 Decree of 13 March 362: *Codex Theodosianus* XII, 1, 50 and Julianus, *Epistula* 54, cf. *Codex Theodosianus* XII, 1, 59 and XVI, 2, 7, with T.G. Elliott, 'The Tax Exemptions granted to Clerics by Constantine and Constantius II', *Phoenix* 32 (1978), 326–336. Decree of 12 February 363: *Codex Theodosianus* IX, 17, 5 and Julian, *Epistula* 136b, with R. Smith, *Julian's Gods: Religion and Philosophy in the Thought and Action of Julian the Apostate* (London, New York 1995), 111–112, C. de Filippis Cappai, 'Sulla statuizione di Giuliano Augusto in materia di sepolcri ed esequie (*Cod. Theod.* 9,17,5)', *Quaderni del Dipartimento de filologia, linguistica e tradizione classica "Augusto Rostagni"* 14 (2000), 235–239, and U. Volp, *Tod und Ritual in den christlichen Gemeinden der Antike* (Leiden 2002), 254–255 (E. Rebillard, *The Care of the Dead in Late Antiquity* (Ithaca 2009), does not help much). Julian and the cities: Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V, 3, 4; Libanius, *Oratio* 18, 129. Julian and Libanius: See e.g. H.-U. Wiemer, *Libanios und Julian. Studien zum Verhältnis von Rhetorik und Politik im vierten Jahrhundert n. Chr.* (Munich 1995), P.-L. Malosse, 'Rhétorique et psychologie antiques: le portrait de Julien dans l'oeuvre de Libanios', *Ktema* 20 (1995), 319–338, J. Wintjes, *Das Leben des Libanios* (Rahden 2005), 119–133 and I. Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity: Greeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge 2007), 216–225 ('Scholars now generally accept that Libanios' relationship with Julian was far from straightforward', p. 221). Cf. further the literature cited in P.-L. Malosse, 'Actualité et perspectives de la recherche sur Libanios', in U. Criscuolo and L. De Giovanni (eds.), *Trent' anni di studi sulla Tarda Antichità: bilanci e prospettive* (Naples 2009), 229–244.

blanda and explains what this *blanda persecutio* stood for: *Iuliano ad idolorum cultum converso blanda persecutio fuit, inliciens magis quam inpellens ad sacrificandum*.⁶

In his continuation of Eusebius' ecclesiastical history, Rufinus argues in the same vein, as do other authors, pagan and Christian alike. Rufinus calls Julian *callidior ceteris persecutor*, who tried to win the Christians over to his side *non vi neque tormentis, sed praemiis honoribus blanditiis persuasionibus*. According to Eutropius Julian was *religionis Christianae nimis insectator*, but the pagan historian adds: *perinde tamen, ut cruore abstineret*. Libanius states that the emperor refused the use of force against Christians (βιάζεσθαι δὲ οὐκ ἄξιόν). I already referred to Sozomen's comment on Julian's encounter with bishop Maris. Even the Christian bishop Gregory of Nazianzus, who hated the 'Apostate' like poison, has to admit that Julian did not treat the Christians as cruelly as some of his predecessors had done. All this should prompt us to take Julian's own utterances on this subject very seriously. It would be wrong to dismiss these as mere propaganda or as a whitewash, 'a mask of moderation' (τῆς ἐπιεικειᾶς ... προσωπεῖον), as another church historian, Theodoret of Cyrrhus, phrased it.⁷

6 Jerome, *Commentarii in Habacuc* II, 3 (cf. *Commentarii in Zachariam* III, 14). Jerome, *Chronicon* p. 242.12 Helm; on the other hand, in *Chronicon* p. 243 Helm Jerome states that Julian vowed to offer the blood of the Christians to the gods after his victory over the Persians (*Iulianus in Persas profectus nostrum post victoriam dis sanguinem voverat*). See in general for Julian in Christian Latin authors M. Caltabiano, 'L'imperatore Giuliano negli autori latini cristiani del IV secolo', in *Cristianesimo latino e cultura Greca sino al sec. IV* (Studia Ephemeridis "Augustinianum" 42; Rome 1993), 101–116. Some modern scholars: G.W. Bowersock, *Julian the Apostate* (London 1978), 85 ('He never contemplated any other solution to the religious problem than total elimination') and 92 (quoted above, n. 1); S. Scicolone, 'Aspetti della persecuzione giuliana', *Rivista di Storia della Chiesa in Italia* 33 (1979), 420–434; R. Bayliss, *Provincial Cilicia and the Archaeology of Temple Conversion* (BAR International Series 1281; Oxford 2004), 15 ('a revival of some persecution against Christians').

7 Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* X, 33 (cf. F. Thelamon, *Paiens et chrétiens au IV^e siècle. L'apport de l'"Histoire ecclésiastique" de Rufin d'Aquilée* (Rome 1981), 281–284), Eutropius X, 16, 3 (cf. G. Bonamente, *Giuliano l'Apostata e il 'Breviario' di Eutropio* (Rome 1986), 159–164), Libanius, *Oratio* 18, 121, Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V, 4, 8–9 (cf. V, 4, 6–7; VI, 6, 6), Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 4, 57–58 (with Kurmann ad loc.). Apostate (ἀποστάτης): Gregory of Nazianzus, *Oratio* 4, 1, 18, 32, cf. Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III, 12, 1; Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V, 4, 8. See for Sozomen on Julian in the first place D.F. Buck, 'Sozomen on Julian the Apostate', *Byzantion* 76 (2006), 53–73 and cf. further Leppin, *Von Constantin zu Theodosius II.* (cf. n. 4), 72–84 and Van Nuffelen, *Héritage de Paix* (cf. n. 4), 374–377. There are many studies dealing with the relationship between Julian and Gregory of Nazianzus,

In the letter which informs us about Julian's school law is a passage which resembles the words of Jerome and Rufinus. In it Julian states that one ought to teach the silly Christians rather than punish them (καὶ γάρ, οἶμαι, διδάσκειν, ἀλλ' οὐχὶ κολάζειν χρὴ τοὺς ἀνοήτους). To Atarbius, governor of the province Euphratensis, the emperor wrote: 'I affirm by the gods, that I do not wish the Galilaeans to be either put to death or unjustly beaten, or to suffer any other injury' (Ἐγὼ μὰ τοὺς θεοὺς οὐτε κτείνεσθαι τοὺς Γαλιλαίους οὐτε τύπτεσθαι παρὰ τὸ δίκαιον οὔτ' ἄλλο τι πάσχειν κακὸν βούλομαι). Julian's letter to Hecebolius, who, presumably, was governor of the province of Osroene, opens with the words: 'I have behaved to all the Galilaeans with such kindness and benevolence that none of them has suffered violence anywhere or been dragged into a temple or threatened into anything else of the sort against his own will' (Ἐγὼ μὲν κέχρημαι τοῖς Γαλιλαίοις ἅπασιν οὕτω πράως καὶ φιλανθρώπως, ὥστε μηδένα μηδαμοῦ βίαν ὑπομένειν μηδὲ εἰς ἱερὸν ἔλκεσθαι μηδὲ εἰς ἄλλο τι τοιοῦτον ἐπηρεάζεσθαι παρὰ τὴν οἰκείαν πρόθεσιν). Finally, in his letter to the citizens of Bostra we read *inter alia*: 'It is by reason that we ought to persuade and instruct men, not by blows, or insults, or bodily violence. Wherefore, again and often I admonish those who are zealous for the true religion not to injure the communities of the Galilaeans or attack or insult them' (Λόγῳ δὲ πείθεσθαι χρὴ καὶ διδάσκεσθαι τοὺς ἀνθρώπους,

e.g. U. Criscuolo, 'Gregorio di Nazianzo e Giuliano', in Ταλαρίσκος. *Studi graeca* Antonio Garzya *sexagenario oblata* (Naples 1987), 165–208; C. Moreschini, 'Gregorio Nazianzeno e la persecuzione anticristiana di Giuliano l'Apostata', in A. Quacquarelli and I. Rogger (eds.), *I martiri della Val di Non e la reazione pagana alla fine del IV secolo* (Bologna 1985), 85–115; L. Lugaresi, 'Giuliano Imperatore e Gregorio di Nazianzo: contiguità culturale e contrapposizione ideologica nel confronto tra ellenismo e cristianesimo', *Rudiae* 10 (1998), 293–334; S. Elm, 'Ellenismo e Storiografia: Giuliano imperatore e Gregorio Nazianzeno', in A. Marcone (ed.), *Società e cultura in età tardoantica* (Florence 2004), 58–76; S. Elm, 'Gregory of Nazianzus's Life of Julian revisited (Or. 4 and 5): the art of governance by invective', in S. McGill, C. Sogno and E. Watts (eds.), *From the Tetrarchs to the Theodosians: Later Roman History and Culture, 284–450 CE* (Cambridge 2010), 171–182. Theodoret of Cyrrhus: *Historia Ecclesiastica* III, 15, 1 (cf. Th. Urbainczyk, *Theodoret of Cyrrhus: The Bishop and the Holy Man* (Ann Arbor 2002), 30–31 and A. Martin, 'Théodoret et la tradition chrétienne contre l'empereur Julien', in D. Auger and É. Wolff (eds.), *Culture classique et christianisme. Mélanges offerts à Jean Bouffartigue* [Paris 2008], 71–82). Julian not a persecutor: I do not claim to be the first to argue in this vein. Cf. e.g. J. Hahn, *Gewalt und religiöser Konflikt. Studien zu den Auseinandersetzungen zwischen Christen, Heiden und Juden im Osten des Römischen Reiches (von Konstantin bis Theodosius II.)*, Klio Beihefte, Neue Folge 8 (Berlin 2004), *passim*; J. Bouffartigue, 'L'empereur Julien était-il intolérant?', *Revue des Études Augustiniennes et Patristiques* 57 (2007), 1–14 and M. Marcos, '“He forced with gentleness”. Emperor Julian's Attitude to Religious Coercion', *Antiquité Tardive* 17 (2009), 191–204.

οὐ πλῆγαίς οὐδὲ ὕβρεσιν οὐδὲ αἰκισμῷ τοῦ σώματος. Αὐθις δὲ καὶ πολλαῖς παραινῶ τοῖς ἐπὶ τὴν ἀληθῆ θεοσέβειαν ὀρωμένοις μηδὲν ἀδικεῖν τῶν Γαλιλαίων τὰ πλῆθη, μηδὲ ἐπιτίθεσθαι, μηδὲ ὑβρίζειν εἰς αὐτούς).⁸

Although Julian himself rejected the use of violence against the Christians, his pagan subjects did not always follow his example. This can be deduced from the passages quoted above, and it is also evident in Julian's letter to the Alexandrians, which was written with reference to the violent death on 24 December 361 of George the Cappadocian, the Arian successor of the orthodox Athanasius as bishop of Alexandria. The question whether the pagan or the orthodox Christian inhabitants of Alexandria were responsible for the lynching of George and some of his followers, was afterwards disputed. We owe the preservation of one of Julian's letters which otherwise would have been lost to this occurrence, for in his ecclesiastical history Sozomen, who indignantly rejected the view that the Athanasian Christians were to be blamed, cites a letter of Julian in support of his standpoint. In that letter the emperor lectures the pagan Alexandrians, and regrets that they had taken the law into their own hands. He admits that their grievances against the 'enemy of the gods' (τῷ θεοῖς ἐχθρῷ Γεωργίῳ) were justified and that George fully deserved the death penalty, but he censures the Alexandrians for having acted without authorization and for not having taken the slightest notice of the laws. In fact, punishment of the citizens for the violence would be proper. However, he did not want to take such a far-reaching measure. Instead, all he did was to caution the Alexandrians, convinced that as true Hellenes they would be wise enough to heed the lesson.⁹

8 Letter about school law: Julianus, *Epistula* 61c, 424b Bidez. Letter to Atarbius: Julianus, *Epistula* 83, 376c Bidez (= 37 Wright, whose translation I borrow here as well as hereafter). Note that the letter continues with: 'but nevertheless I do assert absolutely that the god-fearing must be preferred to them'. Atarbius: A.H.M. Jones, J.R. Martindale, J. Morris (eds), *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* I (Cambridge 1971), s.v. Atarbius. Hecebolius: *Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire* I, s.v. Hecebolius 2. Letter to Hecebolius: Julianus, *Epistula* 115, 424c (= 40 Wright). Letter to the citizens of Bostra: Julianus, *Epistula* 114, 438b (= 41 Wright).

9 Letter to the Alexandrians: Julianus, *Epistula* 60 Bidez (= 21 Wright) = Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III, 3, 4–25. See for Georgius' death further: *Historia Acephala* 2, 8–10; Ammianus XXII, 11, 8–10; Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* III, 2, 1–3, 3; Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V, 7, 7; Philostorgius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 2, with M. Caltabiano, 'L'assassinio di Giorgio di Cappadocia (Alessandria, 361 d. C.)', *Quaderni Catanesi di Studi classici e medievali* 7 (1985), 17–59; H.C. Brennecke, *Studien* (above, n. 2), 116–119; J.R. Aja Sánchez, 'El linchamiento del obispo Jorge y la violencia religiosa tardoromana', in A. González Blanco, F.J. Fernández Nieto and J. Remesal Rodríguez (eds.), *Arte, sociedad, economía*

The riots in Alexandria which resulted in the death of George the Cappadocian were the first outburst of religious violence during the reign of Julian. It would not be the last. The emperor, who was in Constantinople at the time, had in no way been involved in the disturbances and had clearly, although half-heartedly, shown that he disapproved of the lynching of the Arian bishop. It seems reasonable to assume that Julian's lukewarm reaction stimulated pagans elsewhere to settle accounts with Christians more violently than their emperor deemed right. Anyway, we hear of many conflicts between Christians and pagans during Julian's short reign, for instance in Ancyra and Caesarea. However, as in Alexandria in 361, the emperor himself was not personally involved.

3 Ancyra

After his encounter with bishop Maris of Chalcedon early in June 362, Julian moved eastwards. He went past Libyssa, Nicomedia (Izmit) and Nicaea (Iznik), and then marched through Asia Minor to Ancyra (Ankara) at the head of his army—on the way he found time to visit the ancient sanctuary of the Mother of the Gods in Pessinus, of course a must for the author of a prose hymn to this goddess, written in March 362 during his stay in Constantinople.¹⁰

In Ancyra, according to the *passio s. Basilii presbyteri*, a certain Basil, presbyter of the local Christian church, was led before Julian, whereupon an altercation between emperor and priest took place. During this dispute Julian was so greatly angered by Basil's frankness that he ordered him to be flayed, having seven pieces of skin stripped from his body every day. When he was being flayed for the first time Basil abused Julian, praised God and finally took one of the pieces cut out of his own body and threw it into the emperor's face—not, perhaps, a very common event, but surely one which should provoke curiosity as to Julian's reaction. The author of the *passio*, however, is silent about it, and only says that Julian became annoyed and left for Antioch. But the emperor's departure was not the end of Basil's story. The priest, who miraculously recov-

y religión durante el Bajo Imperio y la Antigüedad Tardía (Antigüedad y Cristianismo 8; Murcia 1991), 111–136; C.J. Haas, 'The Alexandrian Riots of 356 and George of Cappadocia', *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 32 (1991), 281–301; H.C. Brennecke, 'Christliche Quellen des Ammianus Marcellinus', *Zeitschrift für Antikes Christentum* 1 (1997), 226–250 (234–247).

10 From Chalcedon to Pessinus: Ammianus XXII, 9, 3–8, cf. Den Boeft c.s. 1995 (see n. 2), 156–165. Hymn to the Mother of the Gods: Julianus, *Oratio* 8. For its date: V. Ugenti, *Giuliano imperatore. Alla madre degli dei* (Galatina 1992), ix–xi; Den Boeft c.s. 1995, 153.

ered during the night, had to suffer various other tortures in the course of the following days inflicted upon him by Julian's dignitaries before he was finally allowed to die a martyr's death.¹¹

The part played by Julian in the martyrdom of Basil of Ancyra is not referred to in any other source. In fact, we hardly ever find Basil's name mentioned. Neither the most important pro-Julianic pagan sources for Julian's reign, Libanius, Eunapius, Ammianus Marcellinus, and Zosimus, nor their Christian counterparts, Gregory of Nazianzus, John Chrysostom, Socrates, Rufinus, Theodoret, and Philostorgius, say anything about the priest of Ancyra. Only Sozomen devotes some attention to him and reports that Basil was martyred during Julian's reign. However, Sozomen's account is much shorter than the *passio s. Basilii* and differs considerably from it. It lacks, for instance, the detailed description of the torture Basil had to endure. Most importantly, in Sozomen's version there is not a word about Julian's presence in Ancyra. It was not the emperor, but a provincial governor who had the priest tortured and put to death.¹²

Sozomen's story tallies better than the *passio s. Basilii presbyteri* with the picture of Julian's treatment of the Christians which I have sketched so far. I take the opposite view to that of David Woods, who argued in 1992 that Basil's *passio* is 'a reliable historical source', which was 'composed shortly after the death of Basil' and was 'the source of Sozomen's brief notice concerning Basil'. It seems to me that Basil's *passio* belongs to the category of fictitious martyrologies which Father Delehaye calls 'passions épiques' in his epoch-making *Passions des Martyrs*, and that it is a concoction fabricated by an anonymous late antique or Byzantine author who found Sozomen's sober report too meagre. In other words, Basil's *passio* is worthless as a historical source, and its assertion that the emperor Julian personally ordered a priest to be flayed should

11 *Passio s. Basilii presbyteri: Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*³, 242. The editio princeps was published by the Bollandists in Antwerp in 1668: ASS Mart. III, *15-*17 (I have consulted the 1865 Parisian reprint, ed. J. Carnandet, *12-*15), based on cod. Vat. Gr. 655 (saec. XVI). The first editor, Van Papenbroeck, was apparently unaware of the fact that the manuscript he used was directly copied from another Vatican ms., Vat. Gr. 1667 (saec. X or XI). Cf. for this M. Krascheninnikov, *Ioannis Hagioelitae de passione sancti Basilii presbyteri Ancyranı narratio* (Jerevan; Acta et Commentationes Imp. Universitatis Iurievensis [olim Dorpatensis] 1907 nr. 6), vi–ix and H. Delehaye, *Analecta Bollandiana* 27 (1908), 423. Krascheninnikov, *o.c.*, 23–24 lists the main variants. He also prints for the first time on pp. 1–12 a later version of the *passio*, written by Johannes Hagioelita (*Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*³, 243).

12 Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V, 11, 7–11.

be rejected. (Some years ago I tried to prove my point against Woods' view at greater length in *Vigiliae Christianae*; I refer the reader to that article for my detailed argumentation).¹³

4 Caesarea

In June 362, on his way from Ancyra to Antioch, Julian went past Caesarea in Cappadocia, modern Kayseri. On his march through Cappadocia, where the inhabitants were for the most part Christians, he experienced mixed fortunes. In a letter to the philosopher Aristoxenus the emperor wrote that he hoped to meet at last 'a genuine Hellene among the Cappadocians', for he had observed 'that, as yet, some refuse to sacrifice, and that, though some few are zealous, they lack knowledge'. In Caesarea, formerly called Mazaca, he openly quarrelled with the local population. The conflict escalated, and Julian felt compelled to degrade the status of the city to that of a village and to take away its name. From now on Caesarea was to be called Mazaca again (the name Caesarea had been given to the city as a token of honour around the time of the beginning of our era; the precise date is disputed). The change of name did not last. The mere fact that the modern name is Kayseri proves that Julian's order was later revoked.¹⁴

Temples of Zeus and Apollo had been destroyed in Caesarea under Julian's Christian predecessors. According to Sozomen, Julian had taken a strong dislike to the inhabitants of the Cappadocian city for that reason. His antipathy

13 D. Woods, 'The Martyrdom of the Priest Basil of Ancyra', *Vigiliae Christianae* 46 (1992), 31–39, esp. 36–37. He is followed by F. Scorza Barcellona, 'Martiri e confessori dell'età di Giuliano l'Apostata: dalla storia alla leggenda', in F.E. Consolino (ed.), *Pagani e Cristiani da Giuliano l'Apostata al sacco di Roma* (Soveria Manelli 1995), 53–83 (69–71). Passions épiques: H. Delehay, *Les Passions des Martyrs et les Genres Littéraires* (Brussels 1966²), 207 and *passim*. H.C. Teitler, 'History and Hagiography: The Passio of Basil of Ancyra as a Historical Source', *Vigiliae Christianae* 50 (1996), 73–80. Cf. F. Fatti, *Giuliano a Cesarea. La politica ecclesiastica del principe Apostata* (Rome 2009), 77 with n. 117, who supports Woods' view against mine, although he misrepresents or ignores my arguments.

14 Letter to Aristoxenus: Julianus *Epistula* 78 Bidez (= 35 Wright), 375c. Name of Caesarea: According to Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V, 4, 1 it was Claudius who gave Mazaca its venerable name, but see R. Teja, 'Die römische Provinz Kappadokien in der Prinzipatszeit', *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* 2, 7, 2 (1980), 1083–1124 (1105). Julian and Caesarea: Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V, 4, 1–5; Libanius, *Oratio* 16, 14; cf. R. Van Dam, *Kingdom of Snow: Roman Rule and Greek Culture in Cappadocia* (Philadelphia 2002), 98–101.

grew, when during his own reign the temple of Tyche was demolished—the emperor was the more upset because the pagans in the city had not lifted a finger to prevent its destruction. As a punishment Julian not only deprived the city of its name and privileges, and increased the taxes, but he also demanded from the Christian churches in and around Caesarea the handing over of precious objects and other valuables. He further commanded that all the clergy should be enrolled as clerks in the bureau of the provincial governor. Moreover, he threatened that, unless the ravaged temples were rapidly rebuilt, his wrath would not be appeased but ‘he would kill the Galilaeans’ (οὐδὲ τὰς κεφαλὰς συγχωρήσει τοὺς Γαλιλαίους ἔχειν). Had Julian’s death not soon intervened (εἰ μὴ θάπτον ἐτελεύτησεν), this would probably have happened, according to Sozomen—Julian died about a year after his stay in Caesarea, on 26 June 363.

We find the story of Julian and the inhabitants of Caesarea in Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V, 4, 2–6. In a later chapter, V, 11, 7–8, the church historian again speaks of Caesarea, in a rather surprising way. He relates that the newly-wed Eupsychius, a noble of the Cappadocian city, ended his life by martyrdom, and adds: ‘I surmise (συμβάλλω) that Eupsychius was put to death because of the destruction of the temple of Tyche’—note that the church historian does not know for certain what caused Eupsychius’ death, but only expresses an educated guess. ‘I already reported’, Sozomen continues, ‘about that destruction, which aroused the anger of the emperor against all the inhabitants of Caesarea’. The attentive reader will agree. But Sozomen’s next remark comes as a surprise to those who remember what the church historian had said earlier: ‘The men who had demolished the temple were all punished, some with death, others with exile’. Punished with death? Was it not the same Sozomen who shortly before had written that Julian’s death prevented the Galilaeans in Caesarea from being killed?¹⁵

Sozomen may be right in reporting that in Caesarea a certain Eupsychius ended his life by martyrdom, but in view of the inconsistencies in his story it seems very doubtful that it was the emperor Julian who ordered Eupsychius’

15 The newly-wed Eupsychius: in the tenth-century Arethas of Caesarea, *Scripta minora* 1, p. 300 Westerink reports that Eupsychius not only was newly-wed, but a priest as well. Cf. J. Compennass, ‘Zwei Schriften des Arethas von Kaisareia gegen die Vertauschung der Bischofssitze’, *Studi Bizantini e Neoellenici* 4 (1935), 87–125 (93, 107), L.G. Westerink, ‘Marginalia by Arethas in Moscow Greek MS 231’, *Byzantion* 42 (1972), 196–244 (200–201), and F. Halkin, ‘Aréthas de Césarée et le martyr saint Eupsychius’, *Analecta Bollandiana* 91 (1973), 414. In general for Eupsychius: R. Aubert, ‘Eupsychius’, *Dictionnaire d’histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques* 15 (1963), 1419–1420 and P. Bruchi, ‘Eupsichio’, *Bibliotheca Sacra* 5 (1965), 237–238.

execution, *pace* Klaus Rosen, who in his admirable biography of Julian writes: 'Der Kaiser machte Eupsychios den Prozeß und ließ ihn mit einem Teil seiner Helfer hinrichten, die anderen schickte er in die Verbannung.' Such an action, which is, apart from by Sozomen, only mentioned in medieval martyrologia based on Sozomen, does not befit the Julian whom we have met thus far. It is telling that Gregory of Nazianzus, who does relate the fact that Julian punished the city of Caesarea, does not refer to Eupsychius' fate in that connection. The only document which deals extensively with the martyr's agonizing death, the *passio Eupsychii*, and which is preserved in an eleventh-century manuscript, should be regarded as a 'passion épique' (to borrow again Father Delehaye's term). Significantly, in this text it is not Julian, but his second-century predecessor Hadrian who condemns Eupsychius to death.¹⁶

Admittedly, in a letter of Gregory of Nazianzus and in some letters of Basil of Caesarea mention is made of a martyr by the name of Eupsychius, in whose honour a yearly feast was held in Caesarea. It was celebrated on 7 September. Basil further relates that not only Eupsychius, but also Damas (of whom nothing further is known) and other martyrs were commemorated on that day. However, neither Gregory nor Basil reports that the martyrs whose commemoration day was 7 September died during the reign of Julian, so that it is by no means certain that they refer to Sozomen's newly-wed noble. There might well have been another, earlier martyr named Eupsychius, who inspired Sozomen's opinion. Moreover, the date of the feast in Caesarea speaks against this iden-

16 Klaus Rosen, *Julian. Kaiser, Gott und Christenhasser* (Stuttgart 2006), 279; the position of C. Buenacasa Pérez, 'La persecución del emperador Juliano a debate: los cristianos en la política del último emperador pagano (361–363)', *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 21 (2000), 509–529 (525) is not clear: he does refer to Sozomen, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V, 4, 1–5 (without mentioning Eupsychius), but not to V, 11, 7–8 ('los cristianos de Caesarea ... fueron castigados por Juliano por haber demolido los templos de Zeus y Apolo'). Martyrologia: *Menologium Basilii* (9 April), *Synaxarium Constantinopolitanum* (9 April), cited by Comperness, 'Zwei Schriften' (as in n. 15), 107; cf. B. de Gaiffier, "Sub Iuliano Apostata" dans le Martyrologe Romain, *Analecta Bollandiana* 74 (1956), 5–49 (12). Gregory of Nazianzus on Julian and Caesarea: *Oratio* 4, 92, cf. *Oratio* 18, 33–34 with S. Métivier, *La Cappadoce (IVe–VIe siècle). Une histoire provinciale de l'Empire romain d'Orient* (Paris 2005), 116–117. Silence of Gregory re Eupsychius: an argumentum e silentio, admittedly, not accepted by Scorza Barcellona, 'Martiri e confessori' (above, n. 13), 60 n. 23: 'da questo silenzio non si può ricavare però un argomento contro la storicità del fatto'. Brennecke, *Studien* (above, n. 2), 150–152 explains Gregory's silence by supposing that Eupsychius adhered to a Christian denomination which Gregory disliked. *Passio Eupsychii: Bibliotheca Hagiographica Graeca*³, 2130; F. Halkin, 'La Passion inédite de Saint Eupsychius', *Le Muséon* 97 (1984), 197–206.

tification. On 7 September 362 Julian was not in Caesarea, but in Antioch (he arrived in the Syrian capital in July of that year). As I do not wish to be hypercritical I do not rule out the possibility that there is a kernel of truth in Sozomen's story, but, even if there was a martyr by the name of Euppsychius during Julian's reign, the emperor himself cannot be blamed for his death.¹⁷

17 Feast of Euppsychius: Gregory of Nazianzus, *Epistula* 58, 7, Basil, *Epistula* 100, 142, 200, 252, cf. 176; see M. Girardi, *Basilio di Cesarea e il culto dei martiri nel IV secolo. Scrittura e tradizione* (Bari 1990), 159–161 and R. Pouchet, *Basile le Grand et son univers d'amis d'après sa correspondance. Une stratégie de communion* (Rome 1992), 234–236; for the date: P. Devos, 'Aspects de la correspondance de S. Basile de Césarée avec S. Eusèbe de Samos et avec S. Amphiloque d'Iconium', *Analecta Bollandiana* 110 (1992), 241–259 (256–258). Damas and others: Basil, *Epistula* 252 with Pouchet, *Basile*, 413. The date of Julian's arrival in Antioch: Den Boeft et al. 1995 (see n. 2), 177–180. Cf. for the hypothesis that there were two martyrs by the name of Euppsychius in the first place Fatti, *Giuliano a Cesarea* (above, n. 13), 186, 213–220.

Attraction and Hatred. Relations between Jews and Christians in the Early Church

F.J. Elizabeth Boddens Hosang

From the fourth century onwards the Christianization of late antique Roman society was a slow but steady process. One could then ask what the possible effect of the rise of Christianity would have on relations with other religious groups, especially the religion it had sprung from: Judaism. What were the relations between Christians and Jews like from the fourth century onwards? Did the fact that the empire became increasingly Christianized have an effect on these relations, on the official level of church and state and for ordinary faithful? Would a growing awareness of their identity make Christians more or less tolerant towards Jews in comparison, for example, to their attitude towards pagans? Church legislation at this time increasingly focused on non-(orthodox) believers. Paganism became a direct target in the missionary zeal of the church. However, by the sixth century state and church legislation had turned against Jews in particular.¹

The question concerning the rise of Christianity and its relation to Judaism is closely connected to the larger issue of the relations between the two faith groups in the first centuries. This topic has been the issue of heated debate amongst scholars.² Discussions have focused on various themes,³ two will be discussed here.

¹ Cf. *Codex Theodosianus* esp. ch. 16 and council rulings from the sixth century onwards; see also P. Brown, 'Christianization and religious conflict', in A. Cameron and P. Garnsey (eds), *Cambridge Ancient History* 13 (Cambridge 1998), 632–664.

² Cf. A. von Harnack, *Die Mission und Ausbreitung des Christentums in den ersten drei Jahrhunderten* (Leipzig 1906), I; J. Parkes, 'Jews and Christians in the Constantinian Empire', in C.W. Dudgmore (ed.), *Studies in Church History* 1 (London 1964), 69–79; S. Safrai, 'The Era of the Mishnah and the Talmud', in H.H. Ben-Sasson (ed.), *A History of the Jewish People* (Harvard 1976), 307–384; J. Parkes, *The Conflict of the Church and the Synagogue* (New York 1979), pp. 151–196; J. Neusner, *Judaism in the Age of Constantine* (Chicago 1987); A.H. Becker and A.Y. Reed (eds), *The Ways that Never Parted* (Tübingen 2003), 1–32 for a discussion of the publications on the subject.

³ Cf. Becker and Reed, *The Ways*, 1–32.

1 Judaism in Decline?

The first issue concerns the supposed decline in vitality of Judaism in the first centuries. Marcel Simon⁴ dispelled the previously proposed 'lachrymose theory'⁵ by stating that first century Judaism was still a vital force to be reckoned with, actively seeking sympathizers and converts. This was affirmed by Louis Feldman who saw a tremendous growth of the Jewish population in the first century. According to him, this could only be due to intense missionary activities,⁶ an example of which he sees in the existence of 'God-fearers' or 'sympathizers': non-Jews who were attracted to Judaism and adopted many Jewish practices yet never really converted.⁷ Miriam Taylor's review of Marcel Simon⁸ stated that active converting only happened in early Christianity and that there is very little information for Jewish proselytizing activities. Taylor argues against the idea of Jewish missionary activity by stating that Christian texts refer to conversions (e.g. Justin, Tertullian), however, according to her these texts say more about Gentiles converting than about Jewish missionary activities.

These authors support the theory of a rather vibrant Judaism—even after the first century. In the period of Christianity's growth, Judaism needed to reconsider its own identity.⁹ Based on textual evidence, Martin Goodman concludes that proselytes were welcomed into Judaism, but this does not prove active missionary activity.¹⁰ According to Goodman it seems likely that Judaism

4 M. Simon, *Verus Israel* (Paris 1948, repr. London 1996), 19 and following, 167–175, 316–355.

5 Judaism after 70/135 CE was no longer a vital religion: e.g., Harnack, *Die Mission* 1, 220–239.

6 L. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton 1993). Feldman's demographic explanations are based on Baron in the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, yet it is exactly Baron himself who cautions against relying too much on this, that one must be careful with numbers and even that decline is possible after 135 CE: S. Baron, 'Population', in F. Skolnik and M. Berenbaum (eds), *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Detroit 2007), 381–400 (381–385). See also L.V. Rutgers, 'Attitudes to Judaism in the Greco-Roman Period: Reflections on Feldman's Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World', *Jewish Quarterly Review* 85 (1995), 361–395, esp. 363–368.

7 Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 342 and following. See especially note 1 in his chapter 10 for an extensive bibliography on the subject.

8 M. Taylor, *Anti-Judaism and Early Christian Identity* (Leiden 1995), 10–11.

9 Talmud bYev 47a on proselytes; cf. also D. Boyarin, *Border Lines* (Pennsylvania 2004); Boyarin, 'Semantic Differences; or, "Judaism"/ "Christianity"', in Becker and Reed, *The Ways*, 65–85, esp. 71 following; S. Schwartz, *Imperialism and Jewish Society 200 BCE to 640 CE* (Princeton 2001).

10 M. Goodman, *Judaism in the Roman World* (Leiden 2007), 92–93.

was more open to the possibility of gaining converts rather than actively seeking them out.¹¹ Where most scholars mainly used literary sources, Rutgers applies evidence from archeology to provide fresh new insight into the difficult issue of the relationship between Jews and their neighbours.¹² He concludes that there is evidence for conversion to Judaism at this time, yet the actual examples are few and only incidental.

2 Parting of the Ways?

Another issue in the discussion on early Jewish-Christian relations is the question of the 'parting of the ways' of Christianity and Judaism. When did the parting of Christianity from Judaism take place, and at what level? According to some, the separation between Christianity and Judaism originated in the first or second centuries, more recently the fourth century has been proposed.¹³ It is quite possible church leaders in the first centuries considered a separation necessary, even mandatory, but what, realistically speaking, was the actual situation 'on the ground' like, and was it the same in all parts of the Mediterranean? More recent discussions assert that there may not have been any parting as such until perhaps even early medieval times.¹⁴ The attempts by church leaders throughout late antiquity and early medieval times to try to keep the groups separate show that a parting had not yet happened at all levels—that there still was some form of interaction between the two religious groups.¹⁵ Statements made by church leaders show that until very late antiquity, even early medieval times, there was no clear division between Christianity and Judaism.¹⁶ When discussing the possible parting of the ways Rutgers¹⁷ rightly states that in antiquity people easily borrowed from others what they wished to use, without a genuine desire to closely connect to that religious group. This happened in all groups; Jews as well were involved in many aspects of non-Jewish daily life

11 Goodman, *Judaism*, 129–153.

12 L.V. Rutgers, *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism* (Louvain 1998), *passim*.

13 Neusner, *Judaism in the Age of Constantine*; G. Stemmerger, *Jews and Christians in the Holy Land*, (Edinburgh 2000); Boyarin, *Border Lines*.

14 Becker and Reed, *The Ways*, *passim*.

15 Becker and Reed, *The Ways*, 22–24. For examples of this interaction see for example the article by Stökl Ben Ezra on fasting practices in late antiquity, in Becker and Reed, *The Ways*, 259–282.

16 Becker and Reed, *The Ways*, introduction written by the editors.

17 Rutgers, *Hidden Heritage*, 15–44.

(theatre, jobs etc.) around them without wishing to appropriate the religion. He states that 'in antiquity, fascination with the accoutrements of another culture did not mean that one automatically longed to become identical to the representations of that culture'.¹⁸ This view is supported by Fredriksen¹⁹ who states that ancient society presupposed that all peoples had their own gods. Loyalty to one's own god was of the utmost importance. What was especially abhorrent was when one gave up the allegiance to one's god and transferred loyalty elsewhere (i.e. conversion). One could posit that in antiquity everyone was polytheist: one kept one's own god, yet admitted the existence of other gods as well. This is known as henotheism. All religions in the ancient city were, to a certain extent, accessible. It is important to state that pagans remained pagans even when they visited the synagogue. They did nothing different from many others: borrow what you think you can use, discard what you do not.²⁰ However, Fredriksen but also Boyarin emphasize that with the rise of Christianity things changed as Christianity developed a different concept of religion.²¹ The 'Christian concept' of religion—which saw religion separate from ethnicity and culture—as it emerged, undoubtedly had its effect on how the citizens of the Roman Empire, Christians as well as Jews, viewed themselves. Christian anti-Judaism differed in essence from pagan anti-Judaism.²² Pagan anti-Judaism was a subspecies of a more general contempt for unfamiliar foreign customs, yet Christian anti-Judaism was a deeper feeling resulting in Christians not being allowed to even socialize with Jews. Christian anti-Judaism was based on theological presumptions; it knew a literary variant. The rhetoric developed in the second century and became the model for how one should (not) behave. This literary anti-Judaism existed until after the fourth century.

Modern use of the terms 'pagan', 'Christian' and 'Jew' need to be used with certain care when referring to antiquity. In (late) antiquity, individuals could hold varying interpretations of their religion. The variety of ('religious') practices indicated diversity; there was not one paganism, nor one Judaism or Christianity. One adhered to a city, and its god, and the main gods throughout region, with local interpretation and colour. There was no problem for diversity within paganism, only for religions with strong preference for unity or uniformity. The identity feeling was stronger in Christianity. Gradually after the first centuries

18 Rutgers, *Hidden Heritage*, 227.

19 P. Fredriksen, 'What parting of the ways?', in Becker and Reed, *The Ways*, 35–63.

20 Fredriksen, 'What parting', 52.

21 Boyarin, *Border Lines*, 65–85.

22 Fredriksen, 'What parting', 47–48.

a tightening of rules and regulations led to new restrictions and the branding of those outside the orthodox group. Religious leaders defined their faith and practices by indicating their differences with others. Christian orthodoxy was defined and institutionalized through church and imperial laws, resulting in a clearer identification of those who had the right to interpret Scripture and conduct worship, yet diversity continued. Identity feeling became stronger in Judaism after the fall of Jerusalem (70 CE) and after Bar Kochba (135 CE), with the rise of rabbinic Judaism as the authoritative voice for Judaism in Palestine. However, in Judaism as well, different groups still existed also after 70/135 CE.

3 Legal Texts

Until now, studies by historians of late antique Christian-Jewish relations were mostly based on the writings of church fathers. Besides church father texts, and archeological evidence, there is more written source material which provides information on Christian-Jewish relations.

One is Roman imperial legislation. Religion and religious practices were part of Roman public life and considered for the good of all people. Therefore, laws addressed issues concerning all public affairs, including all aspects of religion and religious cults.²³ From the fourth century, Christian legal texts were gradually incorporated into imperial legislation as Christianity gained legal status within the empire. Eventually, laws since the time of Constantine were codified in the *Theodosian Code*, to be adapted by the Visigothic kings (the *Breviarium*), and Justinian's *Code* and *Digest*. The *Theodosian Code* went into effect in 439 and was then the only source of law. Book 16 deals with the church and other religions and was accepted by the church as an authoritative source of canon law.²⁴ Under Constantine the laws still provided benefits and protection for pagan cults but when orthodox Christianity became the norm legislation increasingly turned against pagans, heretics, and also Jews, especially from Theodosius onwards. His preference for Christianity had been 'revealed to him by divine inspiration': all citizens of the empire were to practice 'the religion transmitted by the apostle Peter' (*Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 1, 2).²⁵ Laws grad-

23 C. Ando and J. Rüpke (eds), *Religion and Law in Classical and Christian Rome* (Stuttgart 2006), 8–13.

24 A. Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation* (Jerusalem 1987), 33.

25 Edition by Th. Mommsen and P. Krueger (eds), *Theodosiani libri XVI: cum constitutionibus Sirmondianis: textus cum apparatu* (Hildesheim 2006); also in *Sources Chrétiennes* 497 and 531.

ually turned against those not adhering to orthodox Christianity. Jews were still protected by law and could practice their faith, however, conversion to Judaism was not allowed (*Cod. Theod.* XVI, 8, 7). Jews who had 'converted' to Christianity were to be protected (*Cod. Theod.* XVI, 8, 1, 5). Gradually, however, Jews were restricted in their public activities (*Cod. Theod.* XVI, 8, 16; 8, 24), the Jewish faith eventually was even called a 'perversion' (*Cod. Theod.* XVI, 8, 19). Orthodox Christians longed for their conversion to Christianity or preferably the complete disappearance of their religion.

Another legislative source are church council texts from the fourth century and later. For this study, fourth to sixth century council documents on Christianity's relations with Judaism were examined.²⁶ Councils often began as congregational meetings of clergy and laity, but expanded, as needed, to include clergy from a wider area. These texts give a good insight into the life of the Church at the time.²⁷ Many of the issues discussed in the councils form the basis not only for church law but also secular law.²⁸ Eventually, there would be an overlap in topics, indicating closer relations between church and state.²⁹

26 Councils and laws discussed are those with specific references to Jews, contacts between Jews and Christians and Christians accused of 'judaizing practices'. Where general reference is made to a combined group of 'Jews, heretics and pagans', i.e. not a specific reference to Jews or judaizing as such, these are left out: cf. e.g. Carthage (419), c. 129 and Hippo (427), c. 6.

27 That council texts do not only refer to theoretical cases can be seen in the fact that the situations discussed are also found in similar descriptions in church father texts and for example Theophanes' *Chronographia* (PG 108) which mentions (Novatian) Christians celebrating Easter with Jews: one of the issues mentioned in council documents especially in the East. On the issue of recreating society from ancient legal texts, see also J.-J. Aubert and B. Sirks (eds), *Speculum Iuris Roman Law as a Reflection of Social and Economic Life in Antiquity* (Michigan 2005), 169–179; on the problems of using the Theodosian Code as a historical source, see Rutgers, *Hidden Heritage*, 209–219. The Theodosian Code is a Roman legal code and consists, as is usual in Roman law, of a compilation of older and newer legislation. That it is difficult to discern the actual situation from this text is obvious, yet the fact that the various legislation against, for example, proselytism continues shows that at least the Jewish faith was still attractive to non-Jews. This can only be enhanced by the archeological evidence put forward by the author.

28 Such as the issue of Christians involved in non-Christian cults (Elvira canon 49) which is also found in the *Codex Theodosianus* 16,7,3; the *Codex Justinianus* 1,7,2; and the *Breviarium* 16,2,1. Inter-marriage is found at Elvira c. 16 and the second council of Orléans, c. 19, later also in the *Cod. Theod.* 3,7,2 and 9,7,5; *Cod. Just.* 1,9,6 and in the *Brev.* 3,7,2 and 9,4,4.

29 Especially between the council rulings and the *Novellae*, the *Codex Theodosianus* and Justinian's *Code*.

Church council rulings had little judicial control over Jews, but addressed Christian faithful when in contact with Jews or accused of what were considered judaizing practices. Initially, church rulings against Jews concerned their dealings with Christians.³⁰ Eventually, church leaders felt this contact was too close and rulings against Jews developed.

Rulings of council meetings, the canons, have survived from the fourth century onwards. They hale from both the eastern and western parts of the Mediterranean.³¹

4 The Council of Elvira

The first text of a council which has been delivered to the present day is that which was held in the Spanish town of Elvira, a suburb of modern-day Granada.³² The council took place around 305 CE and was the first known gathering of bishops and church representatives from different regions. The list of bishops attending indicates how far Christianity had spread in Spain at this time. The canons describe people of many different walks of life, thus painting a vivid picture of the inhabitants of the early fourth century Iberian peninsula: from landowners (canon 49), charioteers and actors (c. 62), freedmen (c. 80), to slaves (c. 41). Other canons show that Christians still found solace in ‘magical practices’, but were also converts from the pagan priesthood (*flamines*).³³ The council brought forth eighty-one canons, several of which refer to contacts between Christians and Jews, and ‘judaizing’ activities by the Christian faithful.

³⁰ W. Pakter, *Medieval Canon Law and the Jews* (Ebelsbach 1988), 43–56; 64–68.

³¹ That is to say, council texts with canons following the Roman judicial process: E. Ferguson, ‘Creeds, councils and canons’, in S.A. Harvey and D.G. Hunter (eds), *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies* (Oxford 2008), 434–439.

³² Most relevant publications on the council are: A.W.W. Dale, *The Synod of Elvira and Christian Life in the Fourth Century* (London 1882); S. Laeuchli, *Power and Sexuality: The Emergence of Canon Law at the Synod of Elvira* (Philadelphia 1972); A.M. Rabello, *Giustiniano, Ebrei e Samaritani alla luce delle fonte storico-letterarie, ecclesiastiche e giuridiche 2* (Milan 1988), 497–504; E. Reichert *Die Canones der Synode von Elvira* (Hamburg 1990), and more recently M. Sotomayor and J.F. Ubiña (eds), *El Concilio de Elvira y su Tiempo* (Granada 2005); M. Dacy, *The Separation of Early Christianity from Judaism* (New York 2010), 79–89.

³³ Magic: for example sorcery and idolatry canons 6, 20, 29, 34 etc.; pagan practices: e.g. canon 2, 3, 39, 41 etc.

Canon 16

Haeretici si se transferre noluerint ad Ecclesiam catholicam, nec ipsis catholicas dandas esse puellas; sed neque iudaeis neque haereticis dare (legari) placuit, eo quod nulla possit esse societas fideli cum infideli: si contra interdictum fecerint parentes, abstinere per quinquennium placet.

Heretics, if they are unwilling to change over to the catholic Church, are not to have catholic girls (in marriage); nor shall they [the girls]³⁴ be given to Jews or heretics, since there can be no community for the faithful with unfaithful: if parents act against this prohibition, they shall be kept out for five years.³⁵

Canon 49

Admoneri placuit possessores, ut non patiantur fructus suos, quos a Deo percipiunt cum gratiarum actione, a iudaeis benedici, ne nostram irritam et infirmam faciant benedictionem; si quis post interdictum facere usurpaverit, penitus ab Ecclesia abjiciatur.

Landholders are warned not to allow the crops, which they have received from God with an act of thanksgiving, to be blessed by Jews lest they make our blessing ineffectual and weak. If anyone dares to do this after the prohibition, he shall be thrown out of the Church completely.

Canon 50

Si vero quis clericus vel fidelis cum iudaeis cibum sumpserit, placuit eum a communione abstinere, ut debeat emendari.

If any of the clergy or the faithful eats with Jews, he shall be kept from communion in order that he be corrected, as he should.

The *Theodosian Code* (XVI, 7, 3) speaks out against Christians involved in non-Christian cults—whether pagan, Jewish or Manichaean. The law dates

³⁴ My insertion, for clarification.

³⁵ All Latin texts are from C.J. Hefele, and H. Leclercq, *Histoire des conciles d'après les documents originaux* (Paris 1907), I.1, 221–264. Translations are mine.

to 388 and is a lengthy decree on Christians participating in non-Christian cults. The law appears in a shorter version in Justinian's *Code* (1, 7, 2) and the *Breviarium* (16, 2, 1). The part of the text applicable to our discussion reads:

Christianorum ad aras et templa migrantium negare testandi licentia vindicamus admissum. Eorum quoque flagitia puniantur, qui Christianae religionis et nominis dignitate neglecta iudaicis semet polluere contagiis. [...]

We punish the crime of Christians passing over to altars and temples by abrogating their power to bequeath in testament. Also those who despise the dignity of the Christian religion and name and polluted themselves with the Jewish contagions shall be punished for their disgraceful acts.³⁶

The issue is obvious: Christians should not be involved in non-Christian religious activities. At Elvira we first see concerns voiced on marriage and meals between different faith groups.

Fourth century archeological evidence from Spain shows that both Jewish and Christian settlements are found at Tarragona, Elche, Centcelles and other places.³⁷ Many early Christian structures are found in the same areas as early synagogues. Interaction between the two groups is mentioned in texts of Spanish church fathers such as Gregory of Elvira³⁸ and Prudentius,³⁹ yet the information is vague. Clearer information comes from the letter of Severus of Minorca,⁴⁰ yet most noteworthy is the information gleaned from the text of the council of Elvira. Archeology shows the presence of both groups, yet says little about the interaction that took place. This we can find at Elvira in terms of close relations and the borrowing of Jewish practices. The writings of contemporary church fathers provide little information other than theological references to Jews in general.

³⁶ Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, 170–171; incl. his translation.

³⁷ Cf. my *Establishing Boundaries Christian-Jewish Relations in Early Council Texts and the Writings of Church Fathers* (Leiden 2010), 23–34.

³⁸ *Tractatus Origenis* (CCSL 69, 5–146).

³⁹ *Apotheosis* (LCL 387, 398).

⁴⁰ S. Bradbury, *Severus of Minorca: Letter on the Conversion of the Jews* (Oxford 1996), H. Niquet, 'Jews in the Iberian Peninsula in Roman times', *Scripta Classica Israelica* 23 (2004), 159–182.

5 The Council of Laodicea and the Apostolic Canons

In the fourth century, on the eastern side of the Mediterranean, a council took place in the Anatolian town of Laodicea, which lies in southern Phrygia, on the route from west to east leading from Ephesus to Cilicia, and further into Mesopotamia. It was visited by the apostle Paul (Col 2:1; 4:15–16). The council text contains approximately sixty canons, four of which relate to the interaction between the Christians and Jews, and purported judaizing practices.⁴¹

Also from the eastern Mediterranean hail the *Apostolic Canons*. The *Canons* form the penultimate section of Book VIII of the *Apostolic Constitutions*. They do not form a council text as such, however, the composition and phrasing of the rulings indicate that they are a collection of conciliar statements which appear to have been compiled in middle to late fourth century Syria, probably Antioch.⁴² It is not without significance that also from this region and period hails one of the most important church fathers as far as Christian-Jewish relations are concerned—John Chrysostom. The last two chapters of the *Apostolic Constitutions* contain prayers which are obviously Jewish, a ‘Christian’ version of the Jewish Amidah prayers (‘Eighteen Benedictions’).⁴³

Laodicea, Canon 16

Περὶ τοῦ ἐν σαββάτῳ εὐαγγέλια μεθ’ ἑτέρων γραφῶν ἀναγινώσκεισθαι.

On Sabbath, the Gospels should be read with the other scriptures.

⁴¹ ‘Laodicea’ in: *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche* 6, 647–648; P.R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Cambridge 1991), *passim*.

⁴² C.H. Turner, ‘Notes on the Apostolic Constitutions II. The Apostolic Canons’ in: *Journal of Theological Studies* 16 (1915), 523–538; J. Gaudemet, *Les Sources du Droit de l’Eglise en Occident du IIe au VIIe Siècle* (Paris 1985), *passim*; P.-P. Joannou, *Discipline Générale Antique (IVe–IXe s.) vol. I. 2 Les Canons des Synodes Particuliers* (Grottaferrata, Rome 1962); M. Metzger, *Les Constitutions Apostoliques* (3 vols.; SC 320, 329, 336; Paris 1985–1987), I, 55–56; Rabello, *Giustiniano, Ebrei e Samaritani*, 524–529 (Laodicea), 530–536 (*Apostolic Canons*); my *Establishing Boundaries*, ch. 2 and 3.

⁴³ D.A. Fiensy, *Prayers alleged to be Jewish: An Examination of the Constitutiones Apostolorum* (California 1985), *passim*; G.A.M. Rouwhorst, ‘Jewish Liturgical traditions in Early Syriac Christianity’, *Vigiliae Christianae* 51 (1997), 72–93; esp. 80–81; P. van der Horst, ‘Jews and Christians in Antioch at the End of the Fourth Century’, in S.E. Porter and B.W.R. Pearson, *Christian-Jewish Relations through the Centuries* (Sheffield 2000), 36–51. See conclusions for further discussion.

Laodicea, Canon 29

“Οτι οὐ δεῖ χριστιανούς ἰουδαίζειν καὶ ἐν τῷ σαββάτῳ σχολάζειν, ἀλλὰ ἐργάζεσθαι αὐτοὺς ἐν τῇ αὐτῇ ἡμέρᾳ τὴν δὲ κυριακὴν προτιμώντας εἶγε δύναιτο σχολάζειν ὡς χριστιανοί. Εἰ δὲ εὐρεθεῖεν Ἰουδαῖσται ἔστωσαν ἀνάθεμα παρὰ Χριστῷ.

Christians should not judaize and refrain from work on the Sabbath, but they should work on that day. As Christians, they should honor the day of the Lord, [and], as much as possible, refrain from work. If they are found out to be judaizers, let them be anathematized from Christ.

Laodicea, Canon 37

“Οτι οὐ δεῖ παρὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἢ αἵρετικῶν τὰ πεμπόμενα ἑορταστικά λαμβάνειν μηδὲ συνεορτάζειν αὐτοῖς.

One should not receive festal gifts sent from Jews or heretics, nor join in celebrating their feasts.

Laodicea, Canon 38

“Οτι οὐ δεῖ παρὰ τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἄζυμα λαμβάνειν ἢ κοινωνεῖν ταῖς ἀσεβείαις αὐτῶν.

One should not receive unleavened bread from Jews nor join their impieties.

Apostolic Canons 65⁴⁴

Εἴ τις κληρικὸς ἢ λαϊκὸς εἰσέλθοι εἰς συναγωγὴν Ἰουδαίων ἢ αἵρετικῶν προσεύξασθαι καθαιρείσθω καὶ ἀφορίζέσθω.

If any clergyman or layman shall enter into a synagogue of the Jews or heretics to pray, let the former be deposed and the latter be excommunicated.

44 The numbering here follows that used by Metzger, *Les Constitutions Apostoliques* 3 (SC 336).

Apostolic Canons 70

Εἴ τις ἐπίσκοπος ἢ ἄλλος κληρικὸς νηστεύει μετὰ Ἰουδαίων ἢ ἐορτάζει μετ' αὐτῶν ἢ δέχεται αὐτῶν τὰ τῆς ἐορτῆς ξένια, οἷον ἄζυμα ἢ τι τοιοῦτον καθαίρεισθω εἰ δὲ λαϊκὸς ἀφοριζέσθω.

If any bishop, presbyter, or deacon, or any of the list of clergy keeps fast or festival with the Jews, or receives from them any of the gifts of their feasts, as unleavened bread, or any such things, let him be deposed. If he is a layman, let him be excommunicated.

Apostolic Canons 71

Εἴ τις Χριστιανὸς ἔλαιον ἀπένεγκοι εἰς ἱερὸν ἐθνῶν ἢ εἰς συναγωγὴν Ἰουδαίων ἢ λύχνους ἀφοριζέσθω.

If any Christian brings oil into a temple of the heathen or into a synagogue of the Jews at their feast, or lights lamps, let him be excommunicated.

Christian faithful are warned to stay away from Jewish celebrations. Yet, this was difficult for many as Jewish rituals and practices were attractive: synagogues were not only places at which to meet for religious ceremonies, but they were also considered important for swearing an oath,⁴⁵ and for searching a cure.⁴⁶ Not only synagogues provided cures; Jews themselves could provide cures when nothing else seemed to help. It was these practices that the Antiochene preacher John Chrysostom addressed: '[...] their incantations, their amulets, their charms and spells. This is the only way in which they have a reputation for healing; they do not affect genuine cures.'⁴⁷

The restorative powers ascribed to Jews were of great attraction; also at Antioch.⁴⁸ These practices and beliefs remained of great interest to the Christian faithful, much to the chagrin of many church leaders. Council fathers

45 John Chrysostom, *Adv. Judaeos* I, 3 (PG 48, 847).

46 E.g., at Matrona in Daphne, *Adv. Judaeos* I, 6 (48, 852). The Matrona was a cave outside Antioch in the suburb called Daphne. It was a Jewish healing shrine. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile*, 381.

47 *Adv. Judaeos* VIII, 5 (PG 48, 935); I. Sandwell, *Religious Identity in Late Antiquity Greeks, Jews and Christians in Antioch* (Cambridge 2007), 267–271.

48 Cf. also R.L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1983), 83–88, who uses *Adv. Judaeos* 8.

attempted to limit these activities by threatening the culprits with expulsion from the community.⁴⁹

The sermons of John Chrysostom followed the style of rhetoric of the time.⁵⁰ This means that the rhetorician's task was not only to bring across a message, but the style was equally, if not more, important. Sermons had to amuse the public, who would respond by shouting, cheering and applauding. Thus, exaggeration and metaphors form the structure for the message the preacher wished to deliver, as can be seen in the following statement by Chrysostom himself:

[...] but I was not satisfied with prophets nor did I settle for apostles. I mounted to the heavens and gave you as proof the chorus of angels as they sang: 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men'. [...] there was great applause, the audience warmed with enthusiasm [...].⁵¹

These skills in oratory can be found throughout Chrysostom's homilies *Adversus Iudaeos*: judaizers are described as a 'disease' (*Adv. Jud.* 1). He deliberately uses this analogy in his first sermon in order to catch his audience's attention. Because he is dealing with what he describes as a 'disease', a 'cure' is needed: 'This is what physicians do. They tell people in good health what can preserve their health and what can ward off disease. But if people have disregarded their instructions and have fallen sick, physicians do not neglect them [...]'.⁵²

Other metaphors used to describe the Jews in his homilies are in the same vein.⁵³ His language appears abusive, thus one would assume the problem

49 Laodicea c. 35 and 36; Elvira c. 49.

50 Cf. W. Kinzig, 'The Greek Christian Writers', in S.E. Porter, *Handbook of Classical Rhetoric in the Hellenistic Period 330 BC–AD 400* (Leiden 2001), 633–670; on Chrysostom and his homilies: F. Siegert, 'Homily and Panegyric Sermon', in Porter, *Handbook*, esp. 441–443. Cf. also Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, 95–127. As far as the composition of the audience is concerned, see R. MacMullen, 'The Preacher's Audience', *Journal of Theological Studies* 40 (1989), 503–511; W. Mayer, 'John Chrysostom: Extraordinary Preacher, Ordinary Audience', in M.B. Cunningham and P. Allen, *Preacher and Audience Studies in Early Christianity and Byzantine Homiletics* (Leiden 1998), 105–139; Sandwell, *Religious Identity*, 11–20.

51 *Adv. Iudaeos* I, 1 (PG 48, 843).

52 *Adv. Iudaeos* VIII, 3 (PG 48, 931).

53 Jews described as 'wolves' (IV, 1); 'drunks' (VIII, 1); 'sorcerers' (VIII, 7); synagogues are 'haunts of demons' (I, 3).

of judaizing was great and Chrysostom not a great admirer of Judaism. However, in various writings he extols its virtues.⁵⁴ That this rhetorical style has not always been understood can be seen in the misappropriation of parts of Chrysostom's works in later anti-Semitic propaganda.⁵⁵ However, one may gather that also at the time his words undoubtedly had effect on the views Christian faithful had of their Jewish neighbors.⁵⁶

It seems that, in contrast to many church father texts on Jews and Judaism, Chrysostom addresses a genuine situation. Archeological evidence from Sardis, Aphrodisias, Acmonia, Eumeneia and Hierapolis indicate interaction between Jews and their surroundings.⁵⁷ Especially the grave inscriptions used by Jews and Christians, indicate a copying of each other's traditions. The practices described at Laodicea are not issues discussed in Roman imperial legislation, except for celebrating Easter, in reference to heresy (*Cod. Theod.* XVI, 6, 6; XVI, 10, 24), also mentioned at Laodicea.⁵⁸ No reference in Roman law is made to Christians celebrating with Jews or visiting the synagogue, or keeping 'judaizing practices' on sabbath/Saturday.

6 Gaul

Council texts referring to Christians and Jews from the fifth and sixth centuries mostly hail from Gaul. Examples of this interaction can be found in collections as the *Statuta Ecclesiae Antiqua* from fifth century southern Gaul, the fifth and sixth century rulings at Vannes (465), Agde (506), Epaon (517), Clermont (535) and the councils of Orléans (533–538 and 541) and Mâcon (583).⁵⁹ A few examples are discussed below.

54 E.g., *Hom. 5.1 in Hebr.* 2:16 (PG 63, 47).

55 Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews*, 161–164.

56 In 388, for example, the burning of the synagogue of Callinicum (northern Syria), and the reaction by Ambrose of Milan. L.V. Rutgers, *Making Myths: Jews in Early Christian Identity Formation* (Leuven 2009), esp. 117–131; A.S. Jacobs, 'Jews and Christians', in Harvey and Hunter, *Oxford Handbook of Early Christian Studies*, 169–178.

57 Cf. my *Establishing Boundaries* (2010), 79–91, 109–118.

58 Practices by groups as Novatians, Protopaschites, and Sabbatians.

59 Cf. Rabello, *Giustiniano, Ebrei e Samaritani*, 543–596, and my *Establishing Boundaries*, ch. 4, 125–165.

Clermont (535), Canon 9

Ne iudaei christianis populis iudices praeponantur.

Jews should not be appointed as judges over Christian people.

In civil law one sees a similar development taking place at the same time. In March 418, under Theodosius II entrance to state service was closed to those 'living in the Jewish superstition' (*Cod. Theod.* XVI, 8, 24). Linder defines this 'state service' as the various branches of military and civil service.⁶⁰ Until now, Jews had been allowed to practice as lawyers. The *Sirmondian Constitutions* (no. 6) as well state: 'we also deny to the Jews, and to the pagans, the right to practice law and serve in the state service; we do not wish people of the Christian law to serve them, lest they substitute, because of this mastery, the venerable religion by a sect.' Jews could 'abuse' their power over Christians: reason for expelling Jews (and pagans and heretics) from positions of authority.⁶¹ Still later, Jews and heretics were no longer allowed to act as witnesses in trials involving orthodox Christians (Theodosius II, *Novella* 3; 438 and *Cod. Just.* I, 5, 21, July 531). In 409 already, Honorius had declared the Jewish religion 'alien to the Roman empire' and stated that 'anything that differs from the faith of the Christians is contrary to the Christian law (= religion)' (*Cod. Theod.* XVI, 8, 19). He thus established Jews, heretics and pagans as deviant groups; their rights were consequently reduced, their position in society deteriorated.⁶² Signs of growing aggression and hatred against those considered to be dissenters.

Orléans (538), Canon 33

Quia Deo propitio sub catholicorum regum dominatione consistimus, iudaei a die cenae Domini usque in secunda sabbati in pasca, hoc est ipso quadriduo, procedere inter christianos neque catholicis populis se ullo loco uel quacumque occasione miscere praesumant.

As we live, by the grace of God, under catholic kings, Jews may not, from the day of the supper of the Lord until Easter Monday, that is those four days, be present among Christians, nor mingle for whatever reason among the catholic population.

⁶⁰ Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, 280–283.

⁶¹ Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, 305–308.

⁶² Linder, *The Jews in Roman Imperial Legislation*, 65–66.

This ruling is directed towards the Jews rather than against the Christian faithful. Jews are not allowed to be amongst Christians from Holy Thursday to Easter Monday. One may wonder whether this was meant to protect them or rather to limit their actions. Seeing that the opening statement of the canon voices a sense of relief at having a catholic ruler, one may conclude that it is directed against Jews rather than protecting them. In church and civil law during this period a shift takes place from focussing on Christians involved in close contact with Jews to gradually isolating Jews from public life. One realises what effect this isolation had, combined with a theologically inspired negative view of Jews and Judaism in church father texts, on the growing hostility of Christians against Jews.

Several church fathers from Gaul seem to refer to interaction,⁶³ usually conversions, for example Caesarius of Arles⁶⁴ who addresses this issue, as do the councils. The concerns for joint meals and intermarriage recur in council texts of all regions and times. It is therefore surprising not to find any references to these issues in the writings of the church fathers from Gaul. Consulting non-(orthodox) Christians in times of need is mentioned by Gregory of Tours,⁶⁵ Caesarius warns against those who seek solace in consulting seers or magicians, and those who hang phylacteries, amulets and magic letters upon themselves for protection.⁶⁶ These concerns we have seen in Antioch and Laodicea as well.

These church father texts give specific examples of interaction with Jews: not as theological examples, a 'Judaism in the mind', but specific people and incidents. Both church father texts and council rulings indicate that contacts between the two groups—Christians and Jews—in fifth and sixth century Gaul remained closer than the ecclesiastical authorities liked. The relative paucity of Jewish and Christian archeological remains from this period is more than made up for in the literary source material.

63 Sidonius: *Epistolae* III, IV, VI, and VIII (PL 58), Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* VI (AQDGMA 2), Venantius Fortunatus, *Poems* Tome II, Livres V–VIII (Les Belles Lettres, Budé, Collection des universités de France, vol. 346, Série latine) and *Vita S. Germani* 63, on the forced conversions in Clermont, 576 CE (MGH.SRM 7).

64 *Vita* I, 29–31 (PL 67, 1011–1012, n. 21–22) on the siege of Arles (507).

65 Gregory of Tours, *Historia Francorum* V, 6 (AQDGMA 2): the case of Leonastus of Bourges who sought medical advice from a Jew.

66 *Sermones* 50, 51, 52, 54 (SC 243); 184 (CCSL 104, 748–752).

7 Conclusions

Whether or not Judaism was an active missionary religion (Feldman) is unclear; from the evidence presented above it appears that it was certainly not a faith in decline. Council texts show that Christians found their way to their Jewish neighbours, often borrowing from their tradition, much to the chagrin of church fathers as Chrysostom whose virulent homilies appear when his faithful find their way (again) to the synagogue. This evidence goes beyond a merely literary situation, and resulted in reaction from church leaders.

At what point a parting of the ways took place is unclear. According to many church leaders the partition should already have happened. Yet, the situation 'on the ground' appears much more complex. Rather than assume an early and clear partition, the evidence from the council texts, with additional information from archeology and some church fathers, proves otherwise.

Comparing secular imperial law on Jews and Judaism to canon law, one sees a gradual shifting in focus. Influenced by the church, imperial legislation initially protected but eventually limited the functioning of Jews in the public sphere. As a *religio licita*, Judaism was protected under secular law. Gradually, those who were not orthodox-Christians, including Jews, saw secular legislation turn against them.

The steady Christianization of the Roman empire from the fourth century onwards meant a growing need for clearer identity. Within this context we must place the council texts: attempts at establishing boundaries within which the Christian faithful were assumed to stay. Contacts between Christianity and Judaism on the level of the ordinary faithful remained close, and for a much longer period than church leaders liked. This interaction continued until the end of the tenth century when one sees that canons of church councils increasingly focus against Jews in particular and no longer against Christian faithful in their so-called judaizing 'practices'. Church fathers reacted against the interaction, and still grappled with the question of the continuing existence of Judaism which Christianity was supposed to have superseded.⁶⁷ The negative view of Jews and Judaism in church father writings resulted in a rise in hostilities and attacks: not on fictive, but on genuine Jews.⁶⁸ Jews suffered as a result of the theology developed in this formative period and increasing violence and distance between the religious groups was the result. Aggression and violence which

67 Rutgers, *Making Myths*; on paganism but of interest as well: H.A. Drake, 'Lambs into Lions: Explaining Early Christian Intolerance', *Past and Present* 153 (1996), 3–36.

68 E.g., the burning of the synagogue of Callinicum and the reaction by Ambrose of Milan.

began in textual attacks—church and civil laws excluding Jews from the public sphere, and patristic writings exaggerating the negative view of Jews and Judaism, gradually led to actual physical harm to Jews and Jewish property. Early developments of anti-Judaism which eventually led to full-fledged anti-Semitism.

Violence in the Early Years of Cyril of Alexandria's Episcopate

Hans van Loon

In this article, I will discuss the violence in the early years (412–418) of Cyril of Alexandria's episcopate, and especially the role of the bishop himself in it, basing myself on the primary sources. Through the ages, Cyril, the archbishop of Alexandria from 412 till his death in 444, has been described as a saint by some and as a villain by others. The turbulent beginning of his tenure as bishop is partly responsible for negative assessments, but, of course, his attitude and actions during the Nestorian controversy have largely contributed to his reputation, not just positively, but also negatively. The monks of Egypt, who actively supported their bishop during his first years, also played a role at the council of Ephesus in 431,¹ and Cyril is infamous for the scale of the bribes he sent to the imperial court immediately following that council.²

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- 1 While in Ephesus (431), Nestorius and ten fellow-bishops wrote to the emperor about the bishops from Egypt and from Asia Minor: 'Scattering in the market place the partisans (στασιώτας) that were with them, they filled the city with confusion, going round our houses publicly, attacking our meeting and throwing it into confusion', and Nestorius and his friends suggested that 'none of the clergy or of the monks' would be allowed to enter the council, in ACO I, 1, 5 (ed. Eduardus Schwartz, Berlin, Leipzig 1928), 14. In a letter to the emperor, the oriental bishops gathered in Ephesus (431) wrote that they 'found the ecclesiastical affairs in total confusion and in a state of civil war', and that 'Cyril of Alexandria and Memnon [the archbishop of Ephesus] had closed their ranks and had gathered together a multitude of rough men', in ACO I, 1, 5, 124. Nestorius repeats his remarks about the situation in Ephesus in 431 in the *Liber Heraclidis* II, 1, written in 450: 'And the [followers] of the Egyptian and those of Memnon, by whom they were aided were going round the city, girded and armed with rods, stiff-necked men', in G.R. Driver and Leonard Hodgson (eds), *Nestorius: The Bazaar of Heracleides* (Oxford 1925), 266. John A. McGuckin, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology and Texts* (Supplements to Vigiliae Christianae, 23, Leiden 1994; reprint Crestwood, NY 2004), 91, argues that these partisans came not from Egypt, but from Asia Minor, and that they point to 'widespread popular disapproval of Nestorius'. It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss these issues, but the hostile remarks of Nestorius and his supporters should not be taken at face value.
 - 2 A catalogue of bribes is preserved as *ep.* 96, in ACO I, 4 (ed. Eduardus Schwartz, Berlin 1922), 224–225. It is preceded (ACO I, 4, 222–224) by a letter of introduction from Cyril's archdeacon

First, a few examples of the varying ways Cyril of Alexandria has been assessed over the centuries. An unknown contemporary wrote on the occasion of Cyril's death in 444:

At last and not without difficulty the villain's life has come to an end. ... His departure has indeed delighted the survivors, but it may have disheartened the dead. And there is some fear that, burdened by his company, they may send him back to us.³

The Coptic bishop John of Nikiu, however, called him towards the end of the seventh century 'the holy Cyril', 'the great star which lighted up all places by his doctrine, being clothed with the Holy Spirit'.⁴ In a tendentious description of the events, Edward Gibbon, the eighteenth-century English historian, paints Cyril as an ambitious man who develops into 'the Catholic tyrant of Alexandria',⁵ but in 1882 pope Leo XIII declared him a *doctor ecclesiae*. Although Cyril's writings cover ten volumes of Migne's *Patrologia Graeca*, his works are not to be found in the English translation of the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.⁶ Such

Epiphanius to Maximian, Nestorius's successor as archbishop of Constantinople (since the end of October, 431). Bribes had become customary at the court of the emperor, Theodosius II, but the scale of Cyril's bribes was extraordinary. Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* II, 1, in Driver and Hodgson, *Nestorius: The Bazaar*, 279–282, accuses Cyril of paying bribes to Count John, who came to Ephesus in August, 431, and forbade both Cyril and Nestorius to leave the city. Nestorius, *Liber Heraclidis* II, 2, in Driver and Hodgson, *Nestorius: The Bazaar*, 349–351, also writes that the emperor asked for more bribes, when Cyril was in Alexandria again. Rather unconvincingly, he states that Cyril then returned to Ephesus with ships full of bribes, and that he sat on the emperor's throne. See for an assessment, John T. Noonan, Jr., *Bribes: The Intellectual History of a Moral Idea* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, 1984), 104–109.

- 3 Preserved in Latin, as a letter from Theodoret of Cyrus to John of Antioch (which should have been Domnus of Antioch, since John had already died in 441) in the acts of the fifth ecumenical council of Constantinople (553), as part of the 'Three Chapters'; *ep.* 180 (ed. Johannes Straub, ACO IV, 1, Berlin 1971, 135–136). Theodoret's authorship has been doubted by modern scholars.
- 4 John of Nikiu, *The Chronicle* 79, 12, in: Robert Henry Charles, *The Chronicle of John (c. 690 A.D.), Coptic Bishop of Nikiu: Being a History of Egypt Before and During the Arab Conquest* (Amsterdam 1981; reprint of 1916), 76.
- 5 Edward Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. 2, 395 AD–1185 AD (The Modern Library; New York, s.a.), c. 47, 814–826 (825).
- 6 Of Cyril's enormous oeuvre, only three of his letters are to be found in NPNF since they were discussed and two of them canonized at the councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451): Henry R. Percival (ed.), *The Seven Ecumenical Councils* (NPNF II, 14; Buffalo, NY 1900; reprint Peabody, MA 1994), 197–198, 201–217, 251–253.

differences in assessment continue to the present day. The film *Agora*, on the philosopher Hypatia, suggests that Cyril resorted to violent means to extend the powerbase of the church.⁷ But Norman Russell, who published an English translation of parts of Cyril's works, writes:

He was certainly a man of iron will and a consummate ecclesiastical politician. But he was also a theologian of the first rank and a biblical commentator whose insights can still be illuminating today.⁸

1 Sources

As mentioned, I limit myself to the first six years of Cyril's episcopate, 412–418. The most important source is the *Church History* of Socrates of Constantinople, a contemporary of Cyril's.⁹ In Book VII of his *Church History*, Socrates describes several episodes from Cyril's early episcopate. He starts with Cyril's election as archbishop of Alexandria, immediately followed by the closing down of Novatian¹⁰ churches (both in c. 7). Several chapters later, he writes about clashes between Jews and 'Christians' (by which Socrates means the Catholic Christians, whose bishop is Cyril) and between Cyril and the augustal prefect¹¹ Orestes (c. 13). Chapter 14 then describes an attack of monks against Orestes and the latter's response. And finally, Socrates relates the murder of the philosopher

7 The film *Agora*, director Alejandro Amenábar, released in 2009.

8 Norman Russell, *Cyril of Alexandria* (The Early Church Fathers; London, New York 2000), vii.

9 Critical text: G.C. Hansen (ed.), *Sokrates, Kirchengeschichte* (GCS NF 1, Berlin 1995). See also, Pierre Périchon and Pierre Maraval (eds), *Socrate de Constantinople, Histoire ecclésiastique*, 4 vols (SC 477, 493, 505, 506, Paris 2004–2007). English trans.: A.C. Zenos, *Socrates Scholasticus: The Ecclesiastical History* (NPNF II, 2; Buffalo, NY 1890; reprint: Peabody, MA 1994), 1–178.

10 The Novatians formed a Christian church with their own hierarchy besides the Catholic Church, which they regarded as not rigorous enough. They called themselves καθαροί ('pure ones'), but they were commonly referred to as Novatians (Ναυατιανοί), after Novatian, who in 251, after the Decian persecution, set himself up as bishop of Rome, over against the officially elected and consecrated Cornelius. Unlike Cornelius, Novatian refused to admit the *lapsi*, who had sacrificed to the ancestral gods, back into the church, even after penitence. The Novatian Church had followers throughout the Roman Empire and is attested as late as the seventh century.

11 *Praefectus augustalis* was the title of the governor of the province of Egypt in the Roman Empire. It expresses the importance of this province as the granary of the empire. The augustal prefect was accountable to the praetorian prefect of the East.

Hypatia by a Christian mob (c. 15). Each of these events will be discussed in some detail below. When assessing Socrates' rendering of the events, one should keep in mind that he was sympathetic towards the Novatians. Some modern historians even think that he himself was a Novatian.¹² That the new bishop closed the churches of the Novatians is the first thing Socrates mentions after Cyril's election as archbishop in 412.¹³ Thus, Socrates was not positive about Cyril, and we do not have to expect him to paint a rosier picture than the reality.

In the church histories of Sozomen, Philostorgius, and Theodoret, also contemporaries of Cyril's, the archbishop of Alexandria does not feature. Neither do we find any reference to the events mentioned in Cyril's own extensive writings. A source of a much later date is *The Chronicle* of John of Nikiu, the aforementioned Coptic bishop from the end of the seventh century. Not only is he further removed from the events in terms of time, he also paints such an exalted picture of Cyril, as can be seen in the quotation above, that his information should be treated with caution.

As for the murder of Hypatia in 415, we also have the account of the Neoplatonic philosopher Damascius, who was head of the Academy at Athens when the emperor Justinian closed it down. He had studied rhetoric in Alexandria in the 480s, but that was seventy years after the events, while he was a native of Damascus in Syria.¹⁴ His text has been preserved in the article on Hypatia in the tenth-century Byzantine *Suda Lexicon*.¹⁵ Smaller references to Hypatia can be found in Hesychius of Miletus, also preserved in the *Suda Lexicon*, in Philostorgius, *Historia ecclesiastica*,¹⁶ and in Johannes Malalas' *Chronographia*.¹⁷

12 See for a discussion of this question, Martin Wallraff, *Der Kirchenhistoriker Sokrates: Untersuchungen zu Geschichtsdarstellung, Methode und Person* (FKDG 68; Göttingen 1997), 235–257.

13 Christopher Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity: Topography and Social Conflict* (Baltimore, London 1997), 298–299, suggests that the Novatians had opposed Cyril's election to the episcopate, but other scholars dismiss this speculation.

14 See for Damascius's life: Polymnia Athanassiadi, 'Introduction', in: idem, *Damascius, The Philosophical History: Text with Translation and Notes* (Athens 1999), 19–57. *The Philosophical History* is otherwise known as *The Life of Isidore*.

15 Ada Adler, *Suidae Lexicon* 4 (Stuttgart 1971), s.v. Ὑπάτια (No. 166), 644–646.

16 Joseph Bidez (ed.), *Philostorgius, Kirchengeschichte: Mit dem Leben des Lucian von Antiochien und den Fragmenten eines arianischen Historiographen* (GCS 68, 3rd ed., rev. by Friedhelm Winkelmann, Berlin 1981, 1913¹), VIII, 9, 111.

17 Ludwig Dindorf (ed.), *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia* (Bonn 1831; reprint: Athens 1960), c. 14, 359.

2 Cyril's Enthronement and the Novatians

Cyril was born around 378 in a town in Lower Egypt, and his uncle Theophilus, the archbishop of Alexandria, called him to the city and prepared him for an ecclesiastical career. When Theophilus died in 412, Cyril succeeded his uncle as archbishop, but not without disturbances. In the words of Socrates' *Church History*:

Shortly afterwards, Theophilus, the bishop of Alexandria, having suffered from kidney stones, died on the 15th of October, in the ninth consulate of Honorius, and the fifth of Theodosius. A great contest immediately arose about the bishopric, some seeking to enthrone Timothy, the archdeacon, others Cyril, who was a nephew of Theophilus. A tumult having arisen on this account among the people, Abundantius, the commander of the troops, took sides with Cyril. Therefore, Cyril entered on the episcopate with greater power than Theophilus, when, on the third day after Theophilus's death, he was enthroned. For from his time on, the bishopric of Alexandria took control of matters beyond the sacerdotal sphere. Cyril, then, immediately closed down the churches of the Novatians at Alexandria, took possession of all their consecrated objects, and stripped their bishop Theopompus of all that he had.¹⁸

In order to properly assess Cyril's relations with the authorities at the very start of his episcopate, we need to analyze a text-critical issue in this passage. Whereas Hansen's critical edition from 1995 reads that Abundantius took sides with Cyril (τῷ μέρει Κυρίλλου), older editions say that the commander took sides with Timothy (τῷ μέρει Τιμοθέου).

In 1897 an Armenian translation from the sixth (or seventh) century was published, which had not been taken into account in earlier editions of Socrates' *Church History*. Hansen argues that in many cases the Armenian translation has preserved the original text, while the Greek manuscripts have been corrupted. But also the Armenian translation ('Arm') is not free from errors and interpolations.¹⁹ Apparently, without additional information there is no rea-

18 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 7; Hansen, *Sokrates*, 352–353; trans.: my own. *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 7, 3–4a reads: Στάσεως δὲ διὰ τοῦτο μεταξύ τοῦ λαοῦ κινηθείσης, συνελαμβάνετο τῷ μέρει Κυρίλλου ὁ τοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ τάγματος ἡγεμὼν Ἀβουνδάντιος. Διὸ τρίτῃ ἡμέρᾳ μετὰ τὴν τελευταίην Θεοφίλου ὁ Κύριλλος ἐνθρονισθεὶς ἐπὶ τὴν ἐπισκοπὴν ἀρχικώτερον Θεοφίλου παρήλθεν.

19 Hansen, *Sokrates*, xxviii–xxx.

son to prefer Arm's reading. In the instance of Cyril's enthronement, Hansen chooses 'Cyril' from the Armenian translation instead of 'Timothy' from two Greek manuscripts, without giving any further argumentation.²⁰ In a review article of Hansen's edition, Barnes calls this instance 'the most important of all divergences between Arm and the other textual witnesses'.²¹ According to Barnes, 'the reading of Arm is proved correct by the logic of the passage', which he translates as: 'Abundantius attached himself to the party of Cyril. As a result Cyril was enthroned on the third day after the death of Theophilus and entered on his episcopate in a more powerful position than Theophilus'.²²

In an article devoted to Socrates' narrative of Cyril's episcopal election, Susan Wessel elaborates on this argumentation.²³ She states that the Greek text implies that Cyril was elected *because of* the support which the other candidate received from Abundantius, and since this is illogical, the text must originally have read 'Cyril'; and it must have been the copyists who replaced Cyril's name by that of Timothy.²⁴ As a reason for this replacement she proposes that the copyists wanted to portray Cyril in a more favourable light by suggesting 'that it was not military support from imperial troops that installed their bishop, but the proper exercise of the ecclesiastical function'. She adds that 'later summaries of Socrates' account by Byzantine church historians' do not mention Abundantius, which to her 'plainly illustrates' their discomfort with Socrates' version.²⁵ In the edition of the *Church History* in the series *Sources chrétiennes*, Pierre Maraval accepts Wessel's view, stating that the Greek manuscripts read 'Timothy' with the goal of 'innocenter Cyrille'.²⁶

It seems to me, however, that the text-critical issue is not as straightforward as has been suggested.²⁷ First of all, if the logic of the passage would indeed

20 A third Greek manuscript does not contain this passage, while Cassiodorus's *Historia tripartita* abbreviates and does not mention Abundantius. F.C. Conybeare, 'A Collation of the History of Socrates Scholasticus, Books IV–VII, with the Old Armenian Version and with the Latin Version of Epiphanius Scholasticus as Preserved in the Historia Tripartita of Cassiodorus', *Journal of Philology* 34 (1915), 47–77 (68), simply juxtaposes the two readings: '7 § 3 τῷ μέρει Τιμοθέου. Arm. has τ. μ. Κυρίλλου.'

21 T.D. Barnes, 'Armenica Veritas', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 48 (1997), 723–731 (729).

22 Ibid., 729.

23 Susan Wessel, 'Socrates' Narrative of Cyril of Alexandria's Episcopal Election', *Journal of Theological Studies* 52 (2000–2001), 98–104.

24 Ibid., 99, n. 4: 'It makes no sense to claim that Timothy received the military support of Abundantios, and then assert, "wherefore (διό) Cyril was elected"'

25 Ibid., 102.

26 Périchon and Maraval (eds), *Socrate de Constantinople* (SC 506), 35, n. 4.

27 I would like to thank Matthijs de Jong and Michiel Op de Coul for thinking through

compel us to choose the reading 'Cyril' instead of 'Timothy', one could argue that according to the text-critical rule that *lectio difficilior potior* the reading 'Timothy' is more likely to be the original one. For then it would be plausible that the translators of Arm would have replaced the illogical 'Timothy' by the more logical 'Cyril'. That would then be a more probable explanation than Wessel's argument for the reading 'Cyril', that later copyists and historians have adapted the text to protect the bishop against accusations. However, the logic is not that compelling. The Greek text does not necessarily say: Abundantius supported Timothy, *therefore*, Cyril was elected. The main verb in this sentence is *παρήλθεν*, whereas *ἐνθρονισθείς* is a participle. Thus, Socrates' argumentation might be interpreted to read: Abundantius supported Timothy; when Cyril was nevertheless elected as bishop, this strengthened his position. A weakness of this reasoning is that the 'nevertheless' is not made explicit. And the fact that Cyril was enthroned so soon—only three days after his uncle's death—could be explained by the support of the military commander.

Does the broader context give us any clues as to what reading is to be preferred? Obviously, Socrates uses the story of Cyril's enthronement to explain why the archbishop gained more secular power than his uncle. This he immediately illustrates by the example of the closure of the Novatian churches. When in chapters 13–15 of book VII of his *Church History*, Socrates returns to the first years of Cyril's episcopate, an important theme is the opposition between Cyril and the secular powers, especially the prefect. A commander who sides with Cyril's opponent during the episcopal elections is more in line with this theme than one who supports Cyril himself.²⁸ Besides, it makes sense that Cyril could encroach on the secular authorities' territory, if he had been elected despite their opposition, more than when he could only have become archbishop with their support.

this text-critical issue with me. Of course, I am responsible for its presentation and the conclusions.

- 28 Jean Rougé, 'La politique de Cyrille d'Alexandrie et le meurtre d'Hypatie', *Cristianesimo nella storia* 11 (1990), 485–504 (486–487), regards Abundantius as an officer of lower rank and argues that, since the imperial entourage had no reason to distrust Cyril, Abundantius' preference for one of the candidates was a matter of personal choice. It seems to me more likely, however, that it was neither a personal choice nor an imperial decision, but rather the stance of the local authorities over against Theophilus and his nephew. Both the mere fact that Socrates mentions Abundantius and the title 'the commander of the troops' (*ὁ τοῦ στρατιωτικοῦ τάγματος ἡγεμὼν*, with the definite article) suggest that he was more than a lower-rank officer.

Another clue is the relationship between the archbishop and the Christians. Socrates shows on several occasions that Cyril had the support from the church people and the monks. After the Jews had attacked the Christians, Cyril went to the synagogues 'with a great crowd' (σὺν πολλῷ πλῆθει).²⁹ When the prefect refused to reconcile himself with the archbishop, about 500 monks (ἄνδρες περὶ τοὺς πεντακοσίους) left their monasteries in Nitria to fight for Cyril.³⁰ And because Hypatia frequently met with the prefect Orestes, 'this led to the false accusation against her by the people of the church (παρὰ τῷ τῆς ἐκκλησίας λαῷ) that it was she who did not allow Orestes to reconcile himself with the bishop'.³¹ And then there are the *parabalani*, a sort of guard under the authority of the bishop.³² Also, Cyril is smart enough to listen to the people when they disagree with him.³³ To be distinguished from the church people is the Alexandrian population more in general. It is they who 'force' Cyril to send some persons to the prefect to come to reconciliation,³⁴ and who rescue Orestes from the monks.³⁵ It is clear from these later chapters that the archbishop had the support from the people in the church, including the monks from the desert. It seems plausible that they had also supported him during the elections, over against Timothy. And it is possible that just as Orestes could not prevent Cyril from driving the Jews out of the city because of the crowd that accompanied the archbishop (see below), so Abundantius could not prevent Cyril from being elected.

It is, then, by no means self-evident that 'Cyril' is the original reading. There are arguments for both readings. In fact, I tend to think that the reading 'Timothy' is more in line with Socrates' overall narrative, if we take the three

29 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 13, 15.

30 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 14, 2.

31 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 15, 4. Rougé, 'La politique', 492, 500, distinguishes between the πλῆθος, which he interprets as 'plèbe', and the λαός, which tries to appease the discord between the bishop and the prefect. Since, however, it is also said of the λαός that they accuse Hypatia falsely, this distinction seems to lack support in the text.

32 See below. The *parabalani*, however, are not mentioned by Socrates.

33 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 14, 10–11: when the sensible people among the Christians do not approve of Cyril's actions with regard to the monk Ammonius, he lets the episode slide into oblivion.

34 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 13, 19: τοῦτο γὰρ ὁ λαός τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων αὐτὸν ποιεῖν προσηγάγκαζεν. Trans. (my own): 'for this the people of Alexandria had forced him to do.'

35 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 14, 7: Ἐν τοσούτῳ δὲ συνέρρεον οἱ τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων δῆμοι, ἀμύνεσθαι τοὺς μοναχοὺς ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἐπάρχου προθυμούμενοι. Trans. (my own): 'In the meantime, the citizens of Alexandria flocked together because they wanted to repel the monks to protect the prefect.'

later chapters into account. It would imply that from the very beginning of his episcopate the support Cyril received from the church people and the monks was strong enough that he could stand up to the secular authorities.

According to the last sentence in chapter VII, 7 of Socrates' church history, immediately after his consecration Cyril closed down the churches of the Novatians. Imperial laws against schismatics and heretics were repeated regularly, and a law of 407 mentions several such groups by name,³⁶ but the Novatians are not counted among them explicitly until 423.³⁷ Even so, Cyril was not the only one who acted against this group, nor the first one. Leontius of Ancyra and Innocent of Rome had done this before him,³⁸ and Celestine of Rome followed

36 *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 5, 43. Theodor Mommsen et al., *Les lois religieuses des empereurs romains de Constantin à Théodose II (312–438)*, vol. 1, *Code Théodosien, Livre XVI* (SC 497, Paris 2005), 292–294: *Omnia, quae in donatistas, qui et montenses uocantur, manichaeos siue priscillianistas uel in gentiles a nobis generalium legum auctoritate decreta sunt, non solum manere decernimus, uerum in executionem plenissimam effectumque deduci, ita ut aedificia quoque uel horum uel caelicolarum etiam, ..., ecclesiis uindicerentur*. Trans.: Clyde Pharr, *The Theodosian Code and Novels and the Sirmondian Constitutions: A Translation with Commentary, Glossary, and Bibliography* (Princeton, NJ 1952), 458: 'All decrees which We have issued by the authority of general laws against the Donatists, who are also called Montenses, against the Manichaeans or the Priscillianists, or against the pagans, We decree shall not only remain in force but shall be put into the fullest execution and effect. Thus the buildings of the aforesaid persons and those of the Caelicolists also, ..., shall be vindicated to the churches.'

37 *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 5, 59. Theodor Mommsen et al., *Code Théodosien, Livre XVI*, 324: *manichaei et fryges, quos pepyzitas siue priscillianistas uel alio latentiore uocabulo appellant, arriani itidem macedonianique et eunomiani, novatiani ac sabbatiani ceterique haeretici ...* Trans.: Pharr, *The Theodosian Code*, 461: 'The Manichaeans and the Phrygians, who are called Pepyzites, or Priscillianists, or by some other more secret name, and likewise, the Arians, Macedonians, and Eunomians, the Novatians, the Sabbatians, and all other heretics ...'

38 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VI, 22, 9: Λεοντίου δὲ τοῦ Ἀγκύρας τῆς ἐν τῇ μικρᾷ Γαλατίᾳ ἐπισκόπου Ναυατιανῶν ἐκκλησίαν ἀφαιρουμένου; trans. (my own): 'When Leontius, the bishop of Ancyra in Galatia Minor, took away a church from the Novatians, ...' Ibid. VII, 9, 2: μετὰ δὲ Ἀναστάσιον Ἰννοκέντιος. Ὅς πρῶτος τοὺς ἐν Ῥώμῃ Ναυατιανοὺς ἐλαύνειν ἤρξατο πολλὰς τε αὐτῶν ἐκκλησίας ἀφείλετο; trans. (my own): 'After Anastasius came Innocent [as bishop of Rome]. He was the first [bishop] who started to persecute the Novatians in Rome and who took many of their churches away.' Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VIII, 1, 13, in Guy Sabbah et al., *Sozomène, Histoire ecclésiastique, Livres VII–IX* (SC 516, Paris, 2008), 232: ἐνεδήμει μὲν γὰρ τῇ Κωνσταντινουπόλει Λεόντιος ὁ παρὰ Γαλάταις Ἀγκύρας ἐπίσκοπος· ἐκκλησίας δὲ τῶν ἐκείσε Ναυατιανῶν ἀφῆρημένης ἦκε πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀπολαβεῖν ταύτην δεόμενος; trans. (my own):

them in this. Socrates criticizes Celestine, just as he does Cyril, for overstepping the boundaries of his authority and for appropriating secular powers.³⁹ And Nestorius, the archbishop of Constantinople, is said to have acted not only against the Arians, but also against the Novatians.⁴⁰ This, however, was in 428 and, thus, when the law of 423 was in force. That Cyril was not the only one who took actions against the Novatians does not exonerate him, but it places him in a historical context in which his behaviour does not contrast unfavourably with that of other church leaders of his time.

3 Cyril and the Jews

Edward Gibbon writes about the events Socrates describes in chapter VII, 13: 'Without any legal sentence, without any royal mandate, the patriarch [Cyril], at the dawn of day, led a seditious multitude to the attack of the synagogues. Unarmed and unprepared, the Jews were incapable of resistance.' It is only after he has set this tone that he adds: 'Perhaps he might plead the insolence of their prosperity, and their deadly hatred of the Christians, whose blood they had recently shed in a malicious or accidental tumult.'⁴¹ The word 'accidental' does not find any basis in Socrates' narrative, and underlines Gibbon's partiality in his version of Cyril of Alexandria's actions. And he is by no means the only one.⁴²

'For Leontius, the bishop of Ancyra in Galatia stayed in Constantinople, and because he had taken away churches from the Novatians there, he [Sisinnius] went to him and asked him to restore the situation.'

39 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 11: 'Ἄλλ' ὁ φθόνος καὶ τούτων ἤψατο, τῆς Ῥωμαίων ἐπισκοπῆς ὁμοίως τῇ Ἀλεξανδρέων πέρα τῆς ἱερωσύνης ἐπὶ δυναστείαν ἤδη πάλοι προελθούσης. Trans. (my own): 'But envy affected them [the Roman bishops], too, while the Roman episcopate, like that of Alexandria, had since long proceeded beyond its sacerdotal duties to exercising dominion.'

40 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 29, 11: Καὶ γὰρ Ναυατιανούς σκύλλειν ἐπειράτο, ὑποκνίζόμενος ἐφ' οἷς ὁ Ναυατιανῶν ἐπίσκοπος Παῦλος ἐπ' εὐλαβείᾳ περιβόητος ἦν, ἀλλ' οἱ κρατοῦντες παραινέσει κατέστειλλον αὐτοῦ τὴν ὀρμήν. Trans. (my own): 'For he [Nestorius] tried to harass the Novatians, too, being irritated by the fact that the Novatian bishop Paul was known for his piety, but by their admonition the authorities checked his aggression.'

41 Gibbon, *The Decline and Fall*, 815.

42 With respect to Cyril's actions against the Jews, Richard E. Rubenstein, *Aristotle's Children: How Christians, Muslims, and Jews Rediscovered Ancient Wisdom and Illuminated the Middle Ages* (Orlando 2003), 71, writes: 'In the year 415, for reasons that remain obscure, the archbishop incited a large crowd of Christians to attack the Jewish quarter', and in

Socrates starts his story about the relationship between Jews and Christians with the introductory words: 'More than any other people the Alexandrians delight in uproar, and if at any time a pretext arises, they turn it into intolerable evils, for their ardour does not end without bloodshed.'⁴³ Haas regards the tumult in Alexandria, which occurred from time to time over the span of several centuries, as a consequence of conflicting interests of differing ethno-religious groups, especially pagans, Jews, and Christians.⁴⁴ Thus, the clashes during the first years of Cyril's episcopate do not stand alone, but a long history preceded them.

According to Socrates, in this particular case, which modern historians date to the year 414, the problems started during a dancing performance in the theatre on a Sabbath, when many Jews were present. The prefect, Orestes, read an edict which was meant to prevent disturbances, and several of Cyril's followers were present to learn about the regulations. Among them was a certain Hierax, a fervent supporter of Cyril's. When the Jews saw him they started to shout that he was only there to cause a riot. Socrates writes that Orestes hated it that the bishops (plural) encroached on the authority of the secular leaders, and especially that Cyril wanted to check his ordinances. Therefore, he had Hierax arrested and subjected him publicly, in the theatre, to torture.

When Cyril learnt about this, he sent for the leaders of the Jewish community and threatened them with reprisals, if they did not cease harassing the Christians. This only incited the Jews even more, so that they began to plot ways to hurt (ἐπὶ βλάβῃ) the Christians, 'of which', Socrates writes, 'I will tell the most important one, which became the cause of their expulsion from the city'.⁴⁵ They planned to attack the Christians at night, and as a sign of mutual recognition they wore a ring made of the bark of a palm branch. Some of them shouted in the streets that the church of Alexander was on fire. When the Christians ran out to save their church, the Jews 'killed those of the Christians that fell into their hands'.⁴⁶ The next day, Cyril, accompanied by a large crowd, went

a footnote he speaks of a 'singularly unconvincing' report about 'an alleged unprovoked "massacre" of Christians by Jews'. In the film *Agora*, the initiative for the violence is transferred to the Christians, in that they first throw stones at Jews, after which the latter respond by throwing stones at Christians in a church and killing a number of them.

43 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 13, 2; trans.: my own.

44 Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 278–280, 331–336.

45 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 13, 11.

46 Ibid. VII, 13, 14: Οἱ δὲ Ἰουδαῖοι εὐθὺς ἐπετίθεντο καὶ ἀπέσφαττον <*> ἀλλήλων μὲν ἀπεχόμενοι δεικνύντες τοὺς δακτυλίους, τοὺς δὲ προσπίπτοντας τῶν Χριστιανῶν ἀναιροῦντες. Trans. (my

to the synagogues, took possession of them, drove the Jews out of the city, and allowed the people to plunder their possessions.⁴⁷

It is more than obvious that Cyril not only overstepped the boundaries of his authority, but also that he acted in a spirit that cannot be called Christian. Nevertheless, Socrates does not mention murder and killing on the side of the Christians, although one may wonder whether during the expulsion of the Jews no one was killed. In the historian's narrative, it is the Jews who, after a serious threat from the bishop, deliberately planned to murder Christians. And it is Orestes who with his torture of Hierax prompted Cyril to utter these threats.

Socrates adds that in this way the Jews, who had lived in the city since Alexander the Great, were all (ἅπαντες) dispelled, and spread in various directions. According to Robert Wilken, the 'all' is exaggerated, for it is improbable that such a large part of the population would have been driven out of the city all at once, and there are indications that there were Jews living in Alexandria in the sixth century.⁴⁸

4 Cyril and Orestes

It is clear from what was said in the previous section that the relationship between Cyril and the prefect, Orestes, was not good. After the clashes between the Jews and the Christians, both the prefect and the archbishop sent a report of the events to the emperor. But the people forced (προσσηνάγκαζεν) Cyril to send messengers to Orestes to come to reconciliation.⁴⁹ When the prefect did not respond positively, Cyril stretched out the Book of the Gospels to him in order

own): 'The Jews immediately grabbed and slew them, leaving each other unhurt when they showed their rings, but killing those of the Christians that fell into their hands.'

47 Ibid. VII, 13, 15: 'Ἐφ' ᾧ κινηθεὶς ὁ Κύριλλος σὺν πολλῷ πλήθει ἐπὶ τὰς συναγωγὰς τῶν Ἰουδαίων παραγενόμενος (οὕτως γὰρ τοὺς εὐκτηρίους αὐτῶν ὀνομάζουσι τόπους) τὰς μὲν ἀφαιρεῖται, τοὺς δὲ ἐξελαύνει τῆς πόλεως, καὶ τὰς οὐσίας αὐτῶν διαρπαγῆναι ὑπὸ τοῦ πλήθους ἀφείξ. Trans. (my own): 'Cyril was stirred by this, went, accompanied by a great crowd, to the synagogues of the Jews (for this is how they call their houses of prayer), took them away from them and drove the people out of the city, while he allowed the crowd to plunder their possessions.'

48 Robert L. Wilken, *Judaism and the Early Christian Mind: A Study of Cyril of Alexandria's Exegesis and Theology* (YPR 15; New Haven 1971), 57–58. Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 304, writes: 'Although the Jewish community survived in Alexandria, it did so in a much reduced status, and it never again held a significant place in the equation of Alexandrian politics.'

49 See note 34.

to shame him.⁵⁰ Socrates adds that when the prefect could not be pacified, 'the following' happened,⁵¹ after which he recounts in chapter VII, 14 the story that 500 hot-headed monks came from the mountains of Nitria to fight (μάχεσθαι) for Cyril.

After they have arrived in the city, these monks see the prefect riding by in his chariot, and they begin to call him a pagan and a sacrificer, and to insult him in many other ways. Orestes calls out that he is a Christian, baptised by Atticus, the archbishop of Constantinople, but this is ignored by the monks.⁵² One of them, called Ammonius,⁵³ throws a stone, which hits Orestes on the head, as a result of which blood covers his face. His guards flee for fear of being hit by stones themselves, but a crowd of Alexandrians come to the rescue of the prefect and put the monks to flight. They seize Ammonius and hand him over to Orestes, who interrogates him publicly and tortures him until he dies. Both the prefect and the archbishop inform the imperial court once again of what has happened. Cyril then proclaims Ammonius a martyr, and gives him the new name of Thaumasius, but, Socrates writes, the more sober-minded among the Christians do not agree with this, since they know that the reason of Ammonius's death was not that he did not want to deny Christ, and Cyril

50 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 13, 19–20: διὰ ταύτης γοῦν καταιδέσειν τὸν Ὀρέστην ἡγούμενος. Zenos, *Socrates Scholasticus*, 159, translates: 'believing that respect for religion would induce him to lay aside his resentment'. And Périchon and Maraval, *Socrate de Constantinople* (SC 506), 55, render it: 'en pensant ainsi confondre Oreste'. According to Henry George Liddell and Robert Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon* (rev. by Henry Stuart Jones, 9th ed., with rev. suppl., Oxford, 1996), 892, the middle voice καταιδεῖσθαι may mean 'to feel shame' and 'to feel reverence', whereas the active voice καταιδεῖν, which is a later development, merely means 'to put to shame'. Therefore, 'to shame him' seems to be the better translation. Socrates does not in any way link this event concerning the Book of the Gospels with Hypatia, as that is done in the film *Agora*.

51 Ibid., VII, 13, 21.

52 Jean Rougé, 'Les débuts de l'épiscopat de Cyrille d'Alexandrie et le Code Théodosien', in *AAEXANAPINA: Hellenisme, judaïsme et christianisme à Alexandrie. Mélanges offerts au P. Claude Mondésert* (Paris 1987), 339–349 (341), suggests that Orestes' mentioning that he had been baptised by Atticus of Constantinople only exacerbated the situation, because of the rivalry between the two sees and the history of John Chrysostom's deposition. Socrates' text, however, seems to deny such an interpretation, since it states that the monks did not pay attention (οὐ προσεῖχον) to the prefect's words.

53 The few words of Socrates about Ammonius are all we know about this man. All storylines around him in the film *Agora* have been added by the scriptwriter. This also applies to the fictitious person Davus. And bishop Synesius of Cyrene cannot have been present in Alexandria during these events, since he had already died in 413. See Alan Cameron and Jacqueline Long, *Barbarians and Politics at the Court of Arcadius* (Berkeley [etc.] 1993), xiii.

lets it slip into oblivion. But the rivalry between the prefect and the archbishop has not subsided, 'for it was kindled by an occurrence similar to the previous ones',⁵⁴ after which Socrates recounts the murder of Hypatia in chapter VII, 15.

5 Cyril and Hypatia

Socrates starts his narrative about Hypatia with a short sketch of this woman, whom he praises for her knowledge and virtue. She was the daughter of Theon, whom Socrates calls 'philosopher', although we know from other sources that he was mainly involved in mathematics, astronomy and astrology.⁵⁵ The church historian calls Hypatia the best philosopher of her time, who 'succeeded to the Platonic school derived from Plotinus'.⁵⁶ Interestingly enough, the Neoplatonic philosopher Damascius is less positive about Hypatia, when he compares her with his own teacher Isidore: 'Isidore and Hypatia were very different, not only as man differs from woman, but as a true philosopher differs from a mathematician'.⁵⁷ Both Socrates and Damascius write that she regularly met

54 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 14, 12. The critical text reads ἀπέσβεσε (quenched), but Valesius's conjecture ἀνέφλεξε (kindled) is usually accepted, since it fits the context better.

55 Maria Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria* (Revealing Antiquity 8, Cambridge, MA 1995), 68–70, 74–77.

56 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 15, 1: τὴν δὲ Πλατωνικὴν ἀπὸ Πλωτίνου καταγομένην διὰ τριβὴν διαδέξασθαι.

57 Damascius, *The Philosophical History*, 106A, in: Athanassiadi, *Damascius*, 254–255. Cameron and Long, *Barbarians and Politics*, 56–57, suggest that Damascius's downplaying of Hypatia's qualities may have been a response to Synesius's 'sneer' at the philosophers in Athens. In his brief reference to Hypatia, the Eunomian church historian Philostorgius only mentions her involvement in the natural sciences, not her philosophical interests. Bidez, *Philostorgius, Kirchengeschichte*, VIII, 9, 111: "Ὅτι οὗτος Ὑπατίαν τὴν Θέωνος θυγατέρα παρὰ μὲν τοῦ πατρὸς ἐξακῆσαι λέγει τὰ μαθήματα· πολλῶ δὲ κρείττω γενέσθαι τοῦ διδασκάλου, καὶ μάλιστα γὰρ περὶ τὴν ἀστροθεάμονα τέχνην, καὶ καθηγῆσθαι δὲ πολλῶν ἐν τοῖς μαθήμασιν. λέγει δ' ὁ δυσσεβὴς Θεοδοσίου τοῦ νέου βασιλεύοντος διασπασθῆναι τὸ γύναιον ὑπὸ τῶν τὸ ὁμοῦσιον πρεσβεύοντων. Trans.: Philip R. Amidon, *Philostorgius: Church History* (Writings from the Greco-Roman World, 23, Atlanta, GA, 2007), 117: 'He says that Hypatia, Theon's daughter, practiced the sciences under her father's direction but became much better than her teacher, especially at star-gazing, and instructed many people in the sciences. Our heretic also says that during the reign of Theodosius the Younger the woman was torn to pieces by those championing the consubstantialist doctrine.' It is the ninth-century patriarch Photius of Constantinople through whom we have access to Philostorgius's text; 'He says' and 'Our heretic also says' are additions by the patriarch.

the magistrates of the city. The letters from Synesius, bishop of Ptolemais from 410 till his death in 413, show that he had been Hypatia's pupil in the 390s. He continued to correspond with her, also when he was a bishop, and eulogizes her in his letters, calling her 'the most holy and revered philosopher'.⁵⁸ The fragment from Hesychius preserved in the *Suda Lexicon* mentions the names of three works on mathematics and astronomy written by Hypatia, subjects that also her father Theon studied. It was long thought that her writings had been lost, but Cameron and Long suggest that several of her texts are in fact still extant, but have wrongly been attributed to other authors, especially to Theon.⁵⁹

Modern scholars are not in agreement regarding the content of Hypatia's teachings. According to Rist, 'her Platonism is at least in part the Platonism of the Cynic preacher', and, 'virtually untouched by the influence of Plotinus she accepted, taught, and handed on a conservative Platonism'.⁶⁰ Cameron and Long, however, argue that Damascius's remark that Hypatia wore the τρίβων, the cloak of the Cynics, is not to be taken seriously, since it is another attempt to discredit her.⁶¹ Based on Synesius's writings, who must have gained his scientific and philosophical knowledge from Hypatia, they conclude that she was not only well-versed in mathematics and astronomy, like her father, but also in a 'form of Neoplatonism, emphasizing Iamblichus and the Chaldean Oracles'.⁶² In this, her teaching resembled that of the philosophers at Athens, but whereas the Athenians were strict observers of the ancient cult and anti-Christian, every identifiable student of Hypatia was a Christian. In the case of the exact sciences, it is clear that Hypatia was the link between Theon and Synesius, and 'it is surely natural to assume that she played the same role in the case of divination and the Hermetica', Cameron and Long write.⁶³ But 'the atmosphere in Hypatia's classroom' was not as 'aggressively pagan' as that in the Athenian school.⁶⁴

58 Synesius, *ep.* 4, in Antonio Garzya, *Synesii Cyrenensis Epistolae* (Scriptores Graeci et Latini consilio Academiae Lynceorum editi, Rome 1979), *ep.* 5, 25 (in Garzya's numbering *ep.* 4 and *ep.* 5 have switched places): ἀσπασαι τὴν σεβασμιωτάτην καὶ θεοφιλεστάτην φιλόσοφον; trans.: Augustine Fitzgerald, *The Letters of Synesius of Cyrene* (Oxford, London 1926), 90 (based on an older Greek text, in which the two adjectives are reversed).

59 Cameron and Long, *Barbarians and Politics*, 44–49.

60 J.M. Rist, 'Hypatia', *Phoenix* 19 (1965), 214–225 (224).

61 Cameron and Long, *Barbarians and Politics*, 41–44.

62 *Ibid.*, 58.

63 *Ibid.*, 55.

64 *Ibid.*, 58.

In the past, it was often assumed that Hypatia was born round 370. With a reference to an article by Panella,⁶⁵ Maria Dzielska, who has written a monograph on Hypatia, argues that it is more likely that her birth took place ca. 355.⁶⁶ The sixth-century chronicler John Malalas writes in a brief note on Hypatia that she was 'an old woman' (παλαιὰ γυνή) when she died (in 415).⁶⁷ If she had been born in 370, she would only have been 45, whereas a birth-year of 355 would imply that she was 60 at her death. Another argument is that it is not plausible that she would have been in her early twenties when Synesius, who was born ca. 370, was her student. Given the way he speaks about her in his letters, she is more likely to have been considerably older than he. An earlier birth-year, however, would mean that she was already active as a teacher when the Serapeum was destroyed in 391 or 392. In none of the accounts of the destruction of the Serapeum, Hypatia is mentioned. Dzielska explains this by maintaining that the female philosopher, unlike her father, was not interested in the pagan religion, but only in 'the spiritual Hellenic tradition': 'She felt no compulsion to support her Platonism with theurgy and ritual practices, divination, or magic.'⁶⁸

This *argumentum e silentio*,⁶⁹ however, is not convincing, since Hypatia's father Theon does not feature in the narratives about the Serapeum's destruction either,⁷⁰ and Dzielska herself admits that Theon was dedicated to the pagan religion.⁷¹ It is more likely that Cameron and Long are right, when they conclude that Theon handed down his knowledge of divination and astrology

65 Robert J. Panella, 'When Was Hypatia Born?', *Historia* 33 (1984), 126–128.

66 Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria*, 68.

67 John Malalas, *Chronographia* 14, in Dindorf, *Ioannis Malalae Chronographia*, 359.

68 Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria*, 83.

69 Ibid.: 'To judge from the silence of the sources, she found no satisfaction in popular polytheism and did not participate in pagan cult practices.'

70 Rufinus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* XI, 22, in Eduard Schwartz and Theodor Mommsen, *Eusebius Werke*, vol. II/2, *Die lateinische Übersetzung des Rufinus* (GCS 9/2, Leipzig, 1908), 1026, and Sozomenus, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 15, only mention Olympius. Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V, 16, refers only to the grammarians Helladius and Ammonius, who fled to Constantinople, and by whom Socrates himself was taught. And Eunapius, *The Lives of the Philosophers and Sophists* (LCL 134; Cambridge, MA 1968), 418–426, deals with the Serapeum in his account of the philosopher Antoninus, who foretold its destruction, but died shortly before it; he does not mention any other Alexandrian philosopher in relation to the Serapeum.

71 Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria*, 76: 'Theon's down-to-earth knowledge went hand in hand with interests in divination, astrology, and Hermeticism.'

to his daughter, and that Hypatia in turn taught these subjects to her students, as may be gathered from Synesius's writings.⁷²

Hypatia's death has been recorded by various authors. Besides the longer account of Damascius, the *Suda* also contains a shorter text by the sixth-century chronicler Hesychius of Miletus:

She was torn to pieces by the Alexandrians and her body was mocked and scattered through the whole city. She suffered this because of envy (διὰ φθόνον) and her exceptional wisdom, especially with regard to astronomy; according to some, because of Cyril (ὑπὸ Κυρίλλου), according to others, because of (διὰ τό) the innate insolence and rebelliousness of the Alexandrians. For they did this also to many of their own bishops, think of George and Proterius.⁷³

Socrates, the oldest and most reliable of the sources, describes her murder in this way:

Then envy (φθόνος) took up its arms against this woman. For since she frequently met Orestes, this led to the false accusation against her by the people of the church that it was she who did not allow Orestes to reconcile himself with the bishop. And hot-headed men, led by a certain Peter, a reader, conspired and waited for her when she returned home from somewhere. They pulled her from her carriage and dragged her to the church called Caesarium, stripped her clothes off and murdered her with potsherds (ὀστράχαις). After having torn her to pieces, they took the parts to a place called Cinaron, and destroyed them by fire. This brought great shame on Cyril and on the Alexandrian church, for murder, battles, and things like that are totally alien to those who have the mind of Christ.⁷⁴

72 Robbert M. van den Berg, 'De moord op Hypatia: Neoplatoonse filosofie in christelijk Alexandrië', *Lampas* 44 (2011), 377–392, rightly maintains, over against director Amenábar of the film *Agora*, that Hypatia was not an enlightened scientist, but that the point of all her activities was a religious one. Not unlike Dzielska, however, he argues that Hypatia followed Plotinus, not Iamblichus's theurgical teachings, but he does not discuss the provenance of Synesius's knowledge of divination and Hermetism.

73 Adler, *Suidae Lexicon*, 644: τοῦτο δὲ πέπονθε διὰ φθόνον καὶ τὴν ὑπερβάλλουσαν σοφίαν, καὶ μάλιστα εἰς τὰ περὶ ἀστρονομίαν: ὡς μὲν τινες ὑπὸ Κυρίλλου, ὡς δὲ τινες διὰ τὸ ἔμφυτον τῶν Ἀλεξανδρέων θράσος καὶ στασιῶδες; trans.: my own.

74 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 15; trans.: my own. *Historia Ecclesiastica* VII, 15, 4 reads: Κατὰ δὴ ταύτης τότε ὁ φθόνος ὥπλισατο. Ἐπεὶ γὰρ συνετύγχανεν συχνότερον τῷ Ὁρέσῃ, δια-

The church historian adds that this took place in March 415, during Lent. A horrible lynching party—most modern commentators agree on that. But they disagree over the issue of Cyril's involvement and responsibility. And according to Hesychius's testimony, this was already the case in the sixth century. The passage in the *Suda* which is derived from Damascius, puts the blame unequivocally on the archbishop. The introductory sentence in the *Suda*, which links it with Hesychius's fragment, reads: 'Evidence that the Alexandrians [were] rebellious.' Not surprisingly, Adler, who has published the text of Damascius's *Life of Isidore (The History of Philosophy)*, leaves out this sentence, as not belonging to Damascius's text. This is the Neoplatonic philosopher's version of the murder:

It happened one day that Cyril, the man in charge of the opposing sect, was passing Hypatia's house and seeing a great crowd at the door, 'a mix of men and horses',⁷⁵ some going, some coming, and some standing around, he asked what the crowd was and why there was this commotion in front of the house. His attendants told him that honors were being paid to the philosopher Hypatia and that this was her house. When he heard this, envy so gnawed at his soul (δηχθῆναι τὴν ψυχὴν) that he soon began to plot her murder—the most ungodly murder of all. When she left her house as usual, a crowd of bestial men—truly abominable—those who take account neither of divine vengeance nor of human retribution—fell upon and killed the philosopher, thus inflicting the greatest pollution and disgrace on the city.⁷⁶

Thus, according to Damascius, Cyril planned Hypatia's murder and had the plan executed by his followers. It is this view that, since a book by John Toland from 1720,⁷⁷ has been repeated many times, recently also in the film *Agora*. But

βολὴν τοῦτ' ἐκίνησε κατ' αὐτῆς παρὰ τῷ τῆς ἐκκλησίας λαῷ, ὡς ἄρα εἶη αὕτη ἡ μὴ συγχωρούσα τὸν Ὀρέστην εἰς φιλίαν τῷ ἐπισκόπῳ συμβῆναι.

75 A citation from Homer, *Iliad* XXI, 16.

76 Adler, *Suidae Lexicon*, 645; trans.: Athanassiadi, *Damascius*, 131. Clemens Zintzen (ed.), *Damascii Vitae Isidori reliquiae* (Hildesheim 1967), 79, 81, inserts as a conjecture a clause from the *Suda*, s.v. Ὑποσπαιρούσης (Adler, 676) as belonging to Damascius's text, and Athanassiadi follows him in this, inserting 'and while she still gasped for air they cut out her eyes' in between 'killed the philosopher' and 'thus inflicting'.

77 John Toland, 'Hypatia: or, the History of a Most Beautiful, Most Vertuous, Most Learned, and Every Way Accomplish'd Lady; Who Was Torn to Pieces by the Clergy of Alexandria, to Gratify the Pride, Emulation, and Cruelty of their Archbishop, Commonly but Unde-

if we weigh the sources, is this the most likely course of events? Socrates speaks of jealousy, but if we read further it appears that he has the envy of the people of the church in mind, not that of the bishop. They accuse Hypatia of standing in the way of reconciliation between the prefect and the bishop. Because Cyril closed down the churches of the Novatians, Socrates was not well-disposed towards him. It is plausible, therefore, that if he were of the opinion that Cyril was the instigator of the crime, he would have said so explicitly. That, towards the end of the narrative, he writes that this event brought shame on Cyril and on the Alexandrian church, does not imply that Socrates makes the bishop responsible for the murder. For the shameful conduct of the people reflects badly on their spiritual leader.

Damascius wrote about a century after the event. He had studied rhetoric in Alexandria some seventy years after the murder of Hypatia took place, and he will have heard of it then. He may have read Socrates' *Church History*, and perhaps ascribing the envy to Cyril himself is a re-interpretation by the Neoplatonic philosopher. His version suggests that Cyril did not know where Hypatia lived, which is rather unlikely.⁷⁸ From his actions towards the Novatians and the Jews, it may be inferred that Cyril was not afraid to take charge in order to protect—what in his eyes was—orthodox Christianity, and to apply means which not only in our own day, but also in Socrates' eyes, were reprehensible. But in the narratives that he recounts concerning the first years of Cyril's episcopate, Socrates does not ascribe to the bishop a single murder. In an introductory sentence he accuses the Alexandrians in general of being bloodthirsty. The Jews kill Christians, after which Cyril drives them out of the city and takes possession of their synagogues and belongings. The church historian does not say that Jews were killed (although that may have happened). Orestes tortures the monk Ammonius to such a degree that he dies, after he has been wounded by a stone. And it is the people of the church that attack Hypatia. Socrates does not even suggest that they did this at Cyril's instigation. My conclusion is that the widespread view that the archbishop was directly responsible for Hypatia's murder, is incorrect. He will not have planned this murder, probably not even wanted it. But he might be held indirectly responsible, for stimulating a climate in which such an act could take place.

servedly stil'd St. Cyril', in idem, *Tetradymus* (London 1720; reprint: Atheism in Britain 2, Bristol 1996), 101–136.

78 Rougé, 'La politique', 496, goes so far as to utter the possibility that Cyril had sat in on her lectures, when he was still young.

So far, I have left out John of Nikiu's account of Hypatia's murder, because he so eulogizes Cyril that doubts may be raised about the veracity of his narrative. On the other hand, however, Cameron and Long rightly point out that his is the only account that tells the story from the perspective of Cyril's party,⁷⁹ since both Socrates and Damascius were critical of Cyril, each for his own reasons. John emphasizes that Hypatia 'was devoted at all times to magic, astrolabes and instruments of music, and she beguiled many people through (her) Satanic wiles', and he claims that 'she had beguiled him [Orestes] through her magic'.⁸⁰ Dzielska dismisses this as 'a subtle scheme of negative propaganda among the urban mob', devised by Cyril's people to induce them to take action against the philosopher.⁸¹ But as was mentioned above, Dzielska portrays Hypatia as not at all involved in magic and pagan rituals, which is unlikely. It is clear from the fact that several of her students were Christians, two of which became bishops, that she was not the anti-Christian teacher that John of Nikiu paints. But, as Cameron and Long suggest, 'however circumspect Hypatia's pagan activities, they may still have been noticed and found objectionable by the Christian community, or at any rate by a vocal minority thereof'.⁸² Thus, the motive Socrates mentions for Hypatia's murder, that the Christians held her responsible for the prefect's unyielding attitude towards the archbishop, may well have been aggravated by the people's perception that she used magic to reach this goal. This accusation may indeed have contributed to the brutality of the murder.

6 The *Parabalani*

The *parabalani* are often mentioned in literature as being the perpetrators of the murder. For example, Dzielska comments: 'It was surely the parabolans, the patriarch's "guard", who committed the murder of Hypatia.'⁸³ Yet, they are absent from the sources that recount the story of her death. The inference that it was the *parabalani* who actually executed the crime is based on two laws in the *Theodosian Code*, the first from September 416, the second from February 418, both repeated in Justinian's *Code*. Both laws call them *parabalani* with

79 Cameron and Long, *Barbarians and Politics*, 40–41.

80 John of Nikiu, *The Chronicle* 84, 87–88, in Charles, *The Chronicle of John*, 100–101.

81 Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria*, 90–91.

82 Cameron and Long, *Barbarians and Politics*, 59.

83 Dzielska, *Hypatia of Alexandria*, 96.

an a, although later sources speak of *parabolani* with an o.⁸⁴ A search in the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* (TLG) for the string παραβολαν yields no results at all, a search for the string παραβαλαν yields one hit:⁸⁵ in the acts of the council of Chalcedon, Basil of Seleucia recounts that during the Robber Synod in Ephesus in 449, soldiers, monks, and παραβαλανείς intimidated archbishop Dioscorus's opponents.⁸⁶ There is, then, little to base our opinions on, and concomitantly there is plenty of speculation in literature.

The first of the two laws suggests that the *parabalani* belonged to the clergy, obviously one of the lower ranks. As such, they will have been under the authority of the archbishop. The law stipulates that from now on their number should not exceed 500, they are to be recruited from the ranks of the city's poor only (it should not be possible to buy the position), and their names should be forwarded to the augustal prefect (in Egypt) and by him to the praetorian prefect. Several other restrictions will apply to the *parabalani* as well. In the opening sentence, it is stated that a delegation from Alexandria had asked for a ruling from the emperors because of 'the terror of those who are called *parabalani*'.⁸⁷

It is only in the second law that we get an idea of what these *parabalani* did: they 'are assigned to care for the sick bodies of the weak'.⁸⁸ All sorts of interpretations of their activities have been given, but Bowersock's conclusion seems sensible: 'Their capacity to cause terror would imply physical strength as well as health, and so it is not unreasonable to believe that their real job was to remove the ailing from the city streets into places of isolation.'⁸⁹ Less than one and a half years later, the earlier law is partly reversed. Since 500 is insufficient, their number is raised to 600, and the bishop not only gains the right to choose new members, but he is explicitly placed in charge of them.⁹⁰

84 *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 2, 42 and XVI, 2, 43. Rougé, 'Les débuts', 347. G.W. Bowersock, 'Parabalani: A Terrorist Charity in Late Antiquity', *Anabases* 12 (2010), 45–54 (51).

85 The *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* is a digital library of Greek literature on the internet, hosted by the University of California, Irvine: www.tlg.uci.edu. The searches took place on 24 November 2011.

86 ACO II, 1, 1, 179. A French translation of the passage is given by Rougé, 'Les débuts', 346.

87 *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 2, 42. Theodor Mommsen et al., *Code Théodosien, Livre XVI*, 204: *quod quidem terrore eorum, qui parabalani nuncupantur*; trans.: my own.

88 *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 2, 43. Theodor Mommsen et al., *Code Théodosien, Livre XVI*, 208: *parabalani, qui ad curanda debiliū aegra corpora deputantur*; trans.: my own.

89 Bowersock, 'Parabalani', 50. See for a discussion of the *parabalani*'s tasks also Rougé, 'Les débuts', 347–349.

90 *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 2, 43. Theodor Mommsen et al., *Code Théodosien, Livre XVI*, 208:

It is the first law's timing—one and a half years after Hypatia's death—the word 'terror', and the intimidation by the παραβαλανείς at the Robber Synod that make modern historians conclude that it was the *parabalani* who murdered the philosopher. According to Bowersock, 'these were, almost certainly, the murderers of Hypatia'.⁹¹ Similarly, Wickham states that 'the connection of these *parabalani* with Hypatia's death is certain, I think'.⁹² On the other hand, Wessel writes: 'We may plausibly conclude that Hypatia's murder can be attributed to a ruffian band of Christians who were not among the *parabalani*', since otherwise the emperor would never have restored the group to Cyril's control.⁹³ Haas also argues against the *parabalani*'s responsibility for the philosopher's death. Their involvement would have warranted a charge of murder. The laws, however, do not mention murder, but, instead, they frequently refer to their disruption of 'public affairs and matters pertaining to the municipal council': 'A crowd of Alexandrian laymen, led by a magistrate' (according to John of Nikiu, Peter, their leader, was a magistrate)⁹⁴ is more likely to be meant by Socrates' text than 'a tightly organized corps of church officials', according to Haas.⁹⁵

7 Conclusion

The first years of Cyril of Alexandria's episcopate were volatile, from his election on. The closure of the Novatian churches, the clashes with the Jews, the struggle with the prefect, and the murder of the philosopher Hypatia all followed one another in rapid succession, within the space of four years (412–416). Cyril himself was one of the key players, although Socrates does not involve him personally in anybody's death. The emperor responded by making the prefect responsible for the nomination of the *parabalani*, but within two years this decision was reversed. The primary sources do not mention any more distur-

ita ut hi sescenti uiri reuerentissimi sacerdotis praeceptis ac dispositionibus obsecundent et sub eius cura consistant. Trans.: Pharr, *The Theodosian Code*, 448: 'Thus, these six hundred men shall be subservient to the commands and regulations of the most reverend priest [bishop] and shall continue under his supervision.'

91 Bowersock, *'Parabalani'*, 48.

92 Lionel R. Wickham, *Cyril of Alexandria: Select Letters* (OECT; Oxford 1983), xvii, n. 17.

93 Susan Wessel, *Cyril of Alexandria and the Nestorian Controversy: The Making of a Saint and of a Heretic* (Oxford 2004), 57.

94 John of Nikiu, *The Chronicle* 84, 100, in Charles, *The Chronicle of John*, 102.

95 Haas, *Alexandria in Late Antiquity*, 314.

bances between the ethno-religious groups in Alexandria during the remaining time of Cyril's episcopate, from 418 till 444.⁹⁶ In this article, I have looked at the historical sources that deal with these events of violence. Cyril himself does not refer to them in his writings at all. However, he has written extensively about the Jews and to a lesser degree also about Greek philosophy and pagan religion, also in the early years of his episcopate. It would be worthwhile to investigate whether his writings can shed more light on his attitude and behaviour in the years 412–418. I will only make some preliminary remarks on this subject.

As for Cyril's attitude towards the Jews, he had a clear theological stance from the very beginning of his incumbency until the end of his life. Even the name of one of his earliest writings testifies to this: *De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate*.⁹⁷ This is a reference to John 4:23, where Jesus says to the Samaritan woman that 'the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth'. For Cyril, the true worship is that of the Christians, who have knowledge of the mystery of Christ. The Jewish religion and the Old Testament are a type (τύπος) of this true worship. Cyril rebukes the Jews for remaining with the type, rather than moving forward to the truth in Christ. We find this as early as his first festal letter for the year 414: 'For the Jews, who do not know how to abandon their figurative (κατὰ τύπον) and corporeal form of worship, ... But those who have left such things far behind, and are concerned to show God the true circumcision of the heart through worship in the Spirit, ...'⁹⁸ Cyril can be quite abusive in his denunciation of the Jews: 'the Jews, those most senseless of all people',⁹⁹ or: 'the Jews, that is, who practice impiety to the last degree, are scandalized at the cross of Christ our Saviour, and exceed the madness of

96 Probably in 427 or 428, the archbishop translated the relics of the saints Cyrus and John from Alexandria to Menouthis to weaken the influence of the Isis cult there, but there is no record of any disturbances surrounding this event. See John Anthony McGuckin, 'The Influence of the Isis Cult on St. Cyril of Alexandria's Christology', *Studia Patristica* 24 (1993), 291–299.

97 PG 68, 133–1125. No text-critical edition is available yet. See for a discussion of its time of writing Sebastian Schurig, *Die Theologie des Kreuzes beim frühen Cyrill von Alexandria: dargestellt an seiner Schrift 'De adoratione et cultu in spiritu et veritate'* (Studien und Texte zu Antike und Christentum 29; Tübingen 2005), 24–37.

98 *Festal Letter* 1, 1, in Pierre Éviex et al., *Cyrille d'Alexandrie: Lettres Festales I–VI* (SC 372, Paris 1991), 144. Trans.: Philip R. Amidon and John J. O'Keefe, *St. Cyril of Alexandria: Festal Letters 1–12* (FaCh 118, Washington, DC 2009), 36.

99 *Festal Letter* 1, 6, in Éviex et al., *Lettres Festales I–VI*, 172; trans.: Amidon and O'Keefe, *Festal Letters 1–12*, 46.

the pagans'.¹⁰⁰ Although often the bishop will speak of the Jews in general or of those that lived in biblical times, sometimes he speaks directly to them, as if he also has Jews living in Alexandria in mind: 'How long, then, will you disobey, O Jew?'¹⁰¹ And even if he did not have contemporary Jews in view, one may wonder whether his audience always made the distinction between Jews as a theological category and Jews as people with whom they lived in the same city.

As for the Greeks or the pagans ('Ελληνες), Cyril mostly criticizes them for their polytheism.¹⁰² But in the sixth book of *De adoratione* he rejects 'star witchcraft' (ἀστρογογτεία) as idolatry.¹⁰³ And he deals extensively with free will, chiding those who think 'that human affairs are managed by the commands of others'.¹⁰⁴ He specifically mentions 'fate' (Εἰμαρμένη), 'fortune' (Τύχη), and 'the natal situation' (Γένεσις) that are regarded by others as rulers over man's destination. Cyril, then, warns against the astrological practices that Theon and Hypatia were involved in, although there is no direct reference to them. But also after Hypatia's death, the archbishop sometimes returns to these subjects. For example, in *Festal Letter* 6, for the year 418, he defends free will over against 'fate' and the 'natal situation' ('fortune' is not mentioned this time).¹⁰⁵ And in *Festal Letter* 14, for the year 426, he places God's word and the Holy Spirit over against divination and astrology.¹⁰⁶

These few instances can, of course, only give an initial and provisional idea of Cyril of Alexandria's thought-world with regard to Jews and pagans. Further study of these subjects in his writings, especially his early works, may shed more light on the events during the first years of his episcopate.

100 *Festal Letter* 4, 4, in Éviéux et al., *Lettres Festales I–VI*, 256; trans.: Amidon and O'Keefe, *Festal Letters* 1–12, 75.

101 *Festal Letter* 4, 6, in Éviéux et al., *Lettres Festales I–VI*, 264; trans.: Amidon and O'Keefe, *Festal Letters* 1–12, 78.

102 For example, *Festal Letter* 1, 6, in Éviéux et al., *Lettres Festales I–VI*, 180; trans.: Amidon and O'Keefe, *Festal Letters* 1–12, 49. *Festal Letter* 6, 12, in Éviéux et al., *Lettres Festales I–VI*, 392; trans.: Amidon and O'Keefe, *Festal Letters* 1–12, 122.

103 *De adoratione*, PG 68, 408–479. The word ἀστρογογτεία occurs twice in the sixth book: 425B and 441D.

104 *De adoratione*, PG 68, 449–461 (449A).

105 *Festal Letter* 6, 4–5, in Éviéux et al., *Lettres Festales I–VI*, 348–362; trans.: Amidon and O'Keefe, *Festal Letters* 1–12, 106–111. This time, Cyril's defence of free will may have been occasioned by the Pelagian debate, of which the archbishop was aware through the acts of the synod at Diospolis (415) and through Augustine's letter 4* to him.

106 *Festal Letter* 14, 2, in W.H. Burns, Marie-Odile Boulnois and Bernard Meunier, *Lettres Festales XII–XVII* (SC 434, Paris 1998), 144–158.

Priscillian of Avila's *Liber ad Damasum* and the Inability to Handle a Conflict

Joop van Waarden

1 Introduction

The case of Priscillian of Avila is exceptional: a charismatic ascetic and self-made theologian who ended up trying to manipulate ecclesiastical and imperial policy, an anti-clerical layman who became bishop, a well connected and assertive leader who failed to secure the really important relationships, the first and only Christian heretic, as far as we know, who, in antiquity, was condemned to death by a secular court, a senator who, together with his followers, was given a harsh trial and executed like an outlaw, a provincial dissident whose fate shocked opinion leaders across the empire.

Priscillian and his movement have been the subject of much scholarly attention, especially in the last half-century.¹ The interpretation of the social and theological purport of the movement has varied widely. A cross section of schol-

1 Monographs include, in chronological order, E.Ch. Babut, *Priscillien et le Priscillianisme* (Paris 1909), H. Chadwick, *Priscillian of Avila: The Occult and the Charismatic in the Early Church* (Oxford 1976), A.B.J.M. Goosen, *Achtergronden van Priscillianus' Christelijke ascese* (2 vols.; Nijmegen 1976; includes a Dutch translation, 270–368), V. Burrus, *The Making of a Heretic: Gender, Authority, and the Priscillianist Controversy* (Berkeley, CA, 1995), and S.J.C. Sanchez, *Priscillien, un chrétien non conformiste: Doctrine et pratique du priscillianisme du IV^e au VI^e siècle* (Paris 2009). See also B. Vollmann, 'Priscillianus', in Pauly Wissowa Supplement 14 (1974), cols 485–559, R. Van Dam, 'The Heresy of Priscillianism', in R. Van Dam, *Leadership and Community in Late Antique Gaul* (Berkeley, CA, 1985), 88–114, and Ch. Pietri, 'Häresie und staatliche Macht: die Affäre um Priscillian von Avila', in Ch. and L. Pietri (eds.), *Die Geschichte des Christentums. Religion, Politik, Kultur. Altertum 2: Das Entstehen der einen Christenheit (250–430)* (German adaptation of French original; Freiburg 1996), 478–503. The most recent edition of the Priscillianist writings with an introduction, notes and bibliography is M. Conti, *Priscillian of Avila: The Complete Works* (Oxford 2010). Conti's text basically follows the standard edition (also the *editio princeps*) by G. Schepss, *Priscilliani quae supersunt. Accedit Orosii commonitorium de errore Priscillianistarum et Origenistarum* (CSEL 18; Vienna 1889).

arship may illustrate this. While Babut pictured a network of ascetic fraternities in Spain and Gaul aiming to create an ascetic clerus, Barbero de Aguilera saw a Spanish resistance against the Roman oppression by co-opted bishops.² Goosen accentuated the essentially orthodox ascetic-monastic side, whereas Chadwick highlighted the sectarian and heretical traits of kabbala and magic. Van Dam chose a different, anthropological paradigm: internal conflict in a community when intellectuals join who expose the inadequacies of its religious system, and thus threaten local authority. Burrus employed the opposition public versus private: the public (patriarchal and institutional) definition of orthodoxy is accentuated by the presence of the privately construed authority of 'heretic' ascetic preachers. The latest development is, on the one hand, towards a more esoteric interpretation: non-conformism influenced by gnosticism (Sanchez), on the other, towards a broader, non-reductionist view which sets store by the verdict of heterodoxy by contemporaries and advocates a return to the Priscillianist texts themselves (Conti).³

In a return to the text I will present an analysis of Priscillian's petition to Damasus⁴ which will prove to be another contrasting element in this story of extremes. It stands out as a balanced and reasonable document in a controversy full of machinations and violence. This will beg the question as to what caused the glaring inability on both sides to manage the conflict. I will also pay attention to the stark brutality of the final proceedings and the execution.

2 Life of Priscillian

I begin with a short outline of Priscillian's life, and of his movement, to provide the biographical setting for the following analysis.⁵

2 A. Barbero de Aguilera, 'El priscilianismo: ¿Herejía o movimiento social?', *Cuadernos de historia de España* 37–38 (1963), 5–41, inspired by Frend's work on the Donatists as a rural resistance movement (W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford 1952)).

3 See the historiographic surveys in Burrus, *Making of a Heretic*, 18–24, and in Sanchez, *Priscillian* 11–14.

4 *Priscilliani Liber ad Damasum Episcopum*, in Schepss, CSEL 18, 34–43; Conti, *Priscillian*, 68–81. The second of the so-called Würzburg tractates, it is, for intrinsic reasons, almost certainly the document as written by Priscillian himself. See Burrus, *Making of a Heretic*, 50, and Conti, *Priscillian*, 21–25.

5 For a full biography, I refer the reader to the monographs cited earlier. Conti's attempt (*Priscil-*

Priscillian was an educated layman, probably of senatorial rank, whom we first meet in the 370s in south-western Spain. In Baetica and Lusitania he had gathered a following of laymen and clerics, men and women, who distinguished themselves from mainstream Catholicism by a rigorously ascetic practice with—as far as we can see—gnostic and Manichaean tendencies. The movement did not go unnoticed—indeed, it had already spread north of the Pyrenees to Aquitania. Alarmed by this, twelve bishops, among whom Hydatius of Merida, to whose diocese Priscillian may have belonged, and Ithacius of Ossonuba (Faro), who was to be Priscillian's most single-minded enemy, convened in 380 in Saragossa. The synod found fault with excessive asceticism and the unsupervised meeting of men and women, but did not censure any doctrinary deviations.

Back in Merida, Hydatius met with further opposition. In addition, two other bishops, Instantius and Salvianus, supporters of Priscillian, arrived, allegedly to mediate. They were removed from the town. Not much later, probably in 381, they succeeded in installing Priscillian as bishop of Avila, thus paradoxically securing his position as a non-conformist against the established clergy. That was the limit for Hydatius, who appealed to the emperor Gratian (367–383) and received a reply letter, the *rescriptum contra pseudoepiscopos et Manichaeos*.⁶ The gloves were off.

lian, 1–12) is as concise as it is informative. I will be largely following his account, with additions for the purpose of my argument. Apart from the Priscillianist writings, a wide range of ancient sources contributes to the shaping of an image, among which the proceedings of the councils of Saragossa (380) and Toledo (400), Ambrose's letter 30 (Maur. 24) to Valentinian (sect. 12 *devios a fide*, '(the Priscillianists) gone astray from faith', but not to be put to death), Orosius' *Commonitorium* (a critical briefing to Augustine concerning the Priscillianists and the Origenists), Augustine's polemic in *Ad Orosium* and *De haeresibus*, several passages in Jerome's work, at first neutral (*De Viris Illustribus* 121), then negative under the influence of Orosius (*Ep.* 133), Hydatius' *Chronicon* under the appropriate years, and above all Sulpicius Severus, especially in *Chronicon* II, 46–51, in which the portrayal of Priscillian is modelled on Catilina in Sallust, *Bellum Catilinarium* 5, 1–8 (see J. Fontaine, 'L'affaire priscillien ou l'ère des nouveaux Catilina. Observations sur le "sallustianisme" de Sulpice Sévère', in P.T. Brannan (ed.), *Classica et Iberica: A Festschrift in Honor of the Reverend Joseph M.-F. Marique, S.J.* (Worcester, Mass. 1975), 355–392). See Conti, *Priscillian*, 322.

6 In the words of Priscillian himself, *Tractatus* 2, fol. 50, p. 40 l. 29 Schepss, l. 143 Conti. Unfortunately, Conti does not indicate the *folia* of the manuscript, as Schepss does, and has only replaced Schepss' division in lines per printed page by another relative division in lines of the total. I will use the notation 2, 40, 29 (143).

Ousted, Priscillian decided to go to Milan and Rome in order to plead his case, together with Instantius and Salvianus. They travelled via Bordeaux where the rich widow Euchrotia and her daughter joined the company⁷—a vulnerable asset in terms of public relations. The first stop in Italy would seem to have been Milan, but as neither the court nor the bishop (Ambrose, 374–397) were prepared to receive them, they went on to Rome to visit bishop Damasus (366–384).⁸ For the occasion Priscillian had written a petition—the *Liber ad Damasum* mentioned earlier—which had to prove his orthodoxy. However, the doors remained closed and the company returned to Milan. This time money and manipulation proved successful: Gratian's *magister militum*, Macedonius, hostile to Ambrose, cancelled the rescript and paved the way for the reinstatement of the bishops.

But things took an unexpected turn. In 383, the usurpator Magnus Maximus overthrew Gratian and installed himself in Trier. Immediately Ithacius exploited the regime change and informed the new emperor of the Priscillian affair. Maximus, an orthodox Nicene Christian himself and in need of support from the church and from the Eastern emperor Theodosius, took the opportunity with both hands.⁹ He ordered a council to be held in Bordeaux (384), which deposed Priscillian's ally Instantius. Priscillian himself preferred

7 Euchrotia had been the wife of the rhetor Delphidius, a friend of Ausonius, who pays tribute to him in his *Commemoratio professorum Burdigalensium* (11, 5 Green), not to the advantage of his wife and daughter (lines 35–38 'by God's grace you endured less misery being snatched away in middle life, untouched by the lapse of your daughter who went astray and by your wife's punishment' (my translation)). Ausonius, consul of the year 379, was obviously closely associated with Gratian. See D.E. Trout, *Paulinus of Nola: Life, Letters, and Poems* (Berkeley, CA, 1999), 72–76, on how the events touched Ausonius closely and made him suspect Paulinus of association with Priscillianism.

8 Ambrose may even have been behind the *rescriptum* to Hydatius. In Milan, he was in a very awkward position, politically as well as doctrinally. He had to retain Gratian's confidence against allegations by anti-Nicene opponents in his diocese. Hence *De fide ad Gratianum*, which was written during these years. See Burrus, *Making of a Heretic*, 84–89. On Ambrose's inability to impose himself consistently, also N.B. McLynn, *Ambrose of Milan: Church and Court in a Christian Capital* (Berkeley, CA, 1994), 149–152. As to the imperial court, cf. *Tractatus* 2, 41, 14 (155), *sed studio factum fuerit an malo voto, deus iudicabit, ut quaestor, cum iustas praeces diceret, respondere tardarat*, 'but it happened, either out of interest or evil will—God will judge it—that the quaestor, although he said that the request was admissible, was late in giving his response' (trans. Conti, changed by me). Translations of the *Tractatus* are by Conti, unless otherwise stated.

9 See Chadwick, *Priscillian*, 43; Burrus, *Making of a Heretic*, 94.

not to show up and to appeal instead to the emperor—a fatal error as it would turn out.¹⁰

At the court in Trier, several actors tried to influence the proceedings, among whom Martin of Tours and Ambrose who wanted to keep the affair away from the secular judge.¹¹ Maximus, however, pressed the trial. The complaint was probably *maleficium*, ‘black magic’, rather than heresy or Manichaeism.¹² Under torture, Priscillian admitted ‘that he had studied abominable doctrines, had met with indecent women, even at night, and was in the habit of praying naked’.¹³ The sentence was death. Priscillian was beheaded, as were a number of his followers among whom Euchrotia. Others, among whom Instantius, were relegated.

The way the sentence was brought about, its ruthlessness and the subsequent persecution of the Priscillianists in Spain caused a prolonged controversy. In the eyes of many bishops the case ought never to have been decided by the worldly authorities. In reply to critical questions by Siricius, Damasus’ successor as bishop of Rome (384–399), Maximus, felt obliged to defend his

10 Differently from his earlier standpoint, when appealing to Damasus: *Tractatus* 2, 41, 16 (156), *nos tamen, non omittentes in causa fidei sanctorum iudicium malle quam saeculi, venimus Romam*, ‘however, without omitting to prefer the judgment of the saints to that of the world in a case concerning the faith, we came to Rome’.

11 A charismatic and ascetic bishop himself, Martin was accused by Ithacius of the same heresy as Priscillian: Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicon* II, 50, 3–4, *hic stultitiae eo usque processerat, ut omnes etiam sanctos viros, quibus aut studium inerat lectionis aut propositum erat certare ieiuniis, tamquam Priscilliani socios aut discipulos in crimen arcesseret. ausus etiam miser est ea tempestate Martino episcopo, viro plane apostolis conferendo, palam obiectare haeresis infamiam*, ‘he proceeded even to such a pitch of folly as to charge all those men, however holy, who either took delight in reading, or made it their object to vie with each other in the practice of fasting, with being friends or disciples of Priscillian. The miserable wretch even ventured publicly to bring forward a disgraceful charge of heresy against Martin, who was at that time a bishop, and a man clearly worthy of being compared to the apostles’ (trans. Ph. Schaff and H. Wace, New York 1894). See also *Dialogi* 3, 11–13: thereupon Martin refused to impart Holy Communion to Ithacius and his partisans (for this lever see R.W. Mathisen, ‘Les pratiques de l’excommunication d’après la législation conciliaire en Gaule (V^e–VI^e siècle)’, in N. Bériou (ed.), *Pratiques de l’eucharistie dans les églises d’Orient et d’Occident (Antiquité et Moyen Âge)*. *Actes du séminaire tenu à Paris, Institut Catholique* (1997–2004) (Paris 2009)), 539–560.

12 See Burrus, *Making of a Heretic*, 97. Cf. Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicon* II, 50, 8, *convictum ... maleficii*, ‘judged guilty of black magic’.

13 Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicon* II, 50, 8, *obsценis se studuisse doctrinis, nocturnos etiam turpium feminarum egisse conventus nudumque orare solitum*.

behaviour as a matter of state interest, aimed to maintain unity.¹⁴ Thus the cause of Priscillian became the first instance of the age-long struggle between pope and emperor. But also on the political front the question fuelled a polemic, in the propaganda of the emperor Theodosius who, in 388, put an end to the reign of Maximus, in which 'the tyrant' was accused of a judicial murder and of cruelty against pious women.¹⁵ Be that as it may, nobody doubted that they were dealing with an 'infamous gnostic heresy'.¹⁶

Despite persecution the movement survived for two centuries in inaccessible Galicia. There is an interesting hypothesis that Priscillian was buried there, and was venerated in Compostella on the spot where, in the 9th century, the cult of St James began.¹⁷

14 Avell. 40 (CSEL 35, 1, 90–91). The Catholic faith must be unimpaired, *concordantibus univ-
ersis sacerdotibus et unanimiter deo servientibus*, 'through the concord of all the bishops
and their unanimous service to God' (3). Siricius is invited to read the *gesta* of the trial
in order to convince himself that the sentence on the *scelerati* (3) and *Manichaei* (4) was
justified.

15 Thus the rhetor Pacatus—probably from Bordeaux, and, if so, familiar with many of
those involved—in his *Panegyric on Theodosius* (389). He makes much of the cruelty of
the trial, calling Maximus *ille Falaris*, and ironically denouncing the condemnation of
Euchrotia: *Panegyricus* 2, 29, 2, *obiciebatur enim atque etiam probabatur mulieri viduae
nimia religio et diligentius culta divinitas*, 'for a widow was accused and also proved
to be guilty of excessive religious observance and too diligent a worship of God' (my
translation). Nor are the plaintiff bishops spared: 2, 29, 3, *nominibus antistites, re vera
autem satellites atque adeo carnifices*, 'in name bishops, in fact, however, accomplices and
even hangmen'.

16 Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicon* II, 46, 1, *infamis illa Gnosticorum haeresis*. Compare, e.g.,
Orosius, *Commonitorium* 2, *Priscillianus primum in eo Manichaeis miserior, quod ex vet-
eri quoque testamento haeresim confirmavit*, 'in the first place, Priscillian is worse than the
Manichaeans because he has also adduced proofs for the heresy from the Old Testament'
(this statement returns in Augustine, *De haeresibus* 70), and Jerome, first *De Viris Illus-
tribus* 121, *hic usque hodie a nonnullis Gnosticarum ... haereseos accusatur*, 'he is still accused
by some of gnostic heresy', but later *Ep.* 133, 3 *Priscillianus in Hispania pars Manichei de
turpitudine*, 'Priscillian in Spain part and parcel of Mani's disgrace'; 133, 4 ... *ex mago epis-
copum*, 'a magician become bishop'.

17 See Chadwick, *Priscillian*, 233.

3 The Liber ad Damasum

The text of Priscillian's petition, *libellus*, to Damasus is a first-hand document, datable to the autumn of 381 or the spring of 382.¹⁸ It is in the usual form of a letter. The recipient is addressed with *tu*, later with *vos*, and the author refers to the sender(s) as *nos*—a fact to which I will return later. In the following paraphrase and the ensuing analysis, I will point out the tactical elements with which the author puts his case, and how this relates to other petitions.

3.1 *Synopsis*

34, 3 (1)–36, 13 (47) Priscillian begins by saying that he would have preferred to keep silent, but is forced to speak out because of the injury done to him by Hydatius. Fortunately he can plead his cause before St Peter's successor himself. He has converted a long time ago and now is keen, above everything else, to preserve the *pax ecclesiastica*. He emphatically points out that the synod of Saragossa has not condemned him or his two fellow bishops—neither their objective nor their way of life. Rightly so, because their preaching and conduct are indeed irreproachable, and 'there are many dwelling-places in my Father's house'.¹⁹

36, 13 (48)–39, 16 (109) Then he pronounces the credo and the baptismal formula, with explanations as to his orthodoxy. Although he is reluctant to talk about heresies, he expressly condemns Arianism and a series of other heresies, but above all, and forcefully, the Manichaeans, for they are not heretics, but malicious idolaters.

39, 17 (110)–41, 16 (156) He continues with his version of what happened in Merida, where Hydatius had been at the centre of the controversy. His own side had done its utmost to mediate, but regrettably Hydatius became even fiercer and succeeded in getting a rescript 'against pseudo-bishops and Manichaeans'. Of course he got it, for who would not condemn pseudo-bishops and Manichaeans? Only, he had suppressed the names of the bishops involved, and misrepresented bishop Ambrose's intentions to boot.

41, 16 (156)–43, 14 (198) Priscillian, however, prefers to be judged by the church rather than by the world in a matter of faith. So here are the three bishops with the credentials of their churches, begging the bishop of Rome to investigate Hydatius' accusation, especially his allegation that they recognize

18 Conti, *Priscillian*, 19: immediately after Gratian's rescript or at the time of the visit to Rome (381–382).

19 John 14:2. Translations of Bible passages are from *The New English Bible* (Oxford 1970).

foreign authorities outside the Scripture. Let Hydatius be summoned to Rome in order to provide proofs. He need not be afraid as this is no accusation against him. If the plaintiffs are at fault, they will be the first to admit it. However, the rescript of the emperor is wrongfully applied to them. They trust that the bishop of Rome will not separate them from their dioceses against canonical law.

3.2 *Polite but Firm*

Here a rhetorically trained person is at work. The style itself of the plea cannot fail to impress the hearer. It is lucid without being banal, polished without being overdone, and compelling without being emphatic.²⁰

Secondly, it is striking how skilfully the plea manages to cope with the weak spots in the dossier. Doctrinal ambiguity is simply waved away, and the commotion which the dissenters had caused in their dioceses is smoothed over. Hydatius, however, is blamed for having appealed to the emperor, whereas Priscillian and his companions have followed the one course a bishop of Rome would approve: appeal to St Peter's see.²¹ This is precisely the point which is going to cause so much commotion, as we have seen.

With regard to politeness, an essential point in the hierarchical and competitive society of late antiquity, the petition is adequate too. Priscillian ably positions both the addressee and himself according to the norms of socially acceptable conduct: the addressee on a pedestal, the author veiled in modesty (*pudor*).²² Damasus gets all the credits belonging to his seniority and the apostolic succession,²³ is repeatedly called 'your excellency' (*corona tua*)²⁴ and is

20 Thus matching the threefold task of the orator: *probare, conciliare* and *movere* (Cicero, *De Oratore* II, 115).

21 See note 10.

22 For the term *pudor*, basically: 'displeasure with oneself', 'vulnerability to just criticism', see J.A. van Waarden, *Writing to Survive. A Commentary on Sidonius Apollinaris, Letters Book 7. Volume 1: The Episcopal Letters 1–11* (Leuven 2010), 260, with further reference.

23 34, 10 (7) *apud te, qui senior omnium nostrum es et ad apostolicae sedis gloriam vitae experimentis nutritus beato Petro exhortatore venisti*, 'in your hands, as you are the chief of us all and, being nourished with the experiences of life, came to the glory of the apostolic see at the exhortation of the blessed Peter'; 42, 16 (177) *secundum quod tu relictum tibi de apostolis tradis*, 'according to what you transmit which was left to you by the apostles', and 42, 24 (183) *quia omnibus senior et primus es*, 'because you are the most venerable of all and the first'.

24 38, 5 (79) *venerabilem coronam tuam*; 39, 21 (114) *corona venerabilitatis tuae*. Cf. 42, 15 (176) *venerabilis sensus tuos*, 'your venerable judgement' (my translation).

complimented on his benevolence.²⁵ On the other hand, Priscillian presents himself modestly, is keen to preserve unity (seven times *pax*), tries to avoid being importuning (41, 14 (157) *nulli graves*), wants to learn from Damasus (43, 8 (194) *ex vobis discimus*), and refers to himself with a subdued, mostly 'inclusive' ('I and my colleagues'), *nos*.²⁶ The third party, the opposition, gets a polite, if firm, treatment.²⁷

Notwithstanding all this diplomacy and politeness, one thing is perfectly clear: Priscillian is not going to give in. In a double anaphora with *nemo* and *nullum*, he stresses that no members of the movement have been condemned at Saragossa.²⁸ His orthodoxy is beyond reproach. He is cooperative, has taken initiatives towards reconciliation and prefers a peaceful solution, but he is, and will remain, a bishop.

3.3 *Clientelism*

This is the sort of plea Damasus would have expected. We need only look at other *libelli*, for instance—to pick two different examples—Pelagius' petition to 'pope' Innocent (427) and Symmachus' famous third *relatio* to the emperor Gratian (384; let us bear in mind that Symmachus was anything but a dissident

25 42, 27 (186) *insitae tibi benignitatis adfectu*, 'with the tenderness of your innate benevolence'.

26 Damasus is addressed with *tu*, except at the end (*vobis, vestris, scitis*). Nowadays the classic distinction between a modest *nos* and a polite *vos* is being replaced by a definition of the use of *ego/nos* and *tu/vos* in terms of foreground and background (actuality and non-actuality), of, respectively, having 'focus' (i.e., being given an active role, being held responsible, and the like) and being kept 'safely' at a distance (a passive role, not responsible, etc.). In our case, the dominant use of *tu* underlines the prominent and active role which Priscillian attributes to Damasus, except at the end, where the perspective widens towards Scripture and tradition, into which the bishop of Rome is absorbed. See below on the prophetic citation in *diebus vestris*. For the linguistic discussion, see J.A. van Waarden, "'You' and 'I'", in J.A. van Waarden, *Writing to Survive*, 49–52, and S. Pieroni, 'Nos as expression of the "ego" in Cicero's Letters to Atticus (books I–IV)', in P. Anreiter and M. Kienpointner (eds.), *Latin Linguistics Today. Akten des 15. Internationalen Kolloquiums zur Lateinischen Linguistik, Innsbruck, 4.-9. April 2009* (Innsbruck 2010), 599–611.

27 The opposition is accused of unlawful conduct, lies and concoctions, and of sowing conflict: 34, 8 (5) *iniuria*; 34, 18 (8) *falsiloquio*; 35, 7, 9 (20, 22) *contentio* (opposed to *pax*); 35, 22 (33) *inprobos*; 40, 28 (142) *falso*; 40, 29 (142) *fabulam*; 41, 3 (145) *mentitur*; 41, 22 (162) *calumniosas fabulas*; with one emotional swipe at Hydatius: 39, 22 (115) *debaccans toto orbe ... furor*, 'his fury raging all over the world'.

28 At the beginning and at the end of the petition, a sixfold one in 35, 16–19 (27–30) and a quadruple one in 42, 19–21 (180–181).

at the time, but *praefectus urbis*). Both contain the same mix of respect for the addressee and self-assurance.²⁹ Indeed, what else would any competent lawyer do? Therefore, in order to look below the surface, it is important to realize that, once provoked, a dissident could strike quite a different note. Let us look for a moment at Palladius' apology after the synod of Aquileia.³⁰ In September 381, Ambrose made this synod, which Gratian had meant to be oecumenical and reconciling, into a local surprise attack on the homoean bishops of Illyricum. Damasus tactically remained at home, but had written no fewer than three letters which Ambrose read aloud in detail. The Arian notes *in margine* at Ambrose's *De Fide* 1–2 in the Parisinus Latinus 8907 codex give a glimpse behind the scenes.³¹ Furious, Palladius speaks his mind about the trap he has been caught in. For our purpose the following sentence is especially important, directed at Ambrose about Damasus: 'Perhaps the Holy See claims your prerogative *with the consent of intimates and clients*.'³² To Palladius it is clear that, behind the facade of piety and dogma, the real conflict is between the interests of Ambrose's and Damasus' factions. The real problem, he claims, is clientelism and patronage.

Palladius had undoubtedly uncovered a decisive mechanism behind the dealings between Milan and Rome—and imperial and ecclesiastical politics in general, for that matter. In much the same way, patronage will prove to be one of the clues towards the temporary success and final failure of Priscillian's action.

4 Nevertheless Things Went Wrong

Could the petition have been conceived differently and perhaps more effectively?

29 Pelagius' *Libellus fidei ad Innocentium papam* can be found in PL 45, 1716–1718, and 48, 488–491; cf. Augustine, *De gratia et libero arbitrio* 32–36 (in PL 44, 881–912).

30 Palladius, bishop of Ratiaria, modern Archar in Bulgaria, was the spokesman of the Arian bishops in Illyricum.

31 Edition in SC 267: *Scolies ariennes sur le concile d'Aquilée*. Introduction, texte latin, traduction et notes par Roger Gryson (Paris 1980).

32 Sect. 123 *sed forte sedes beatissimi Petri praeerogabam vestram familiarium et clientulorum ad sensione vindicat sibi*. In apparatus: 'vestram = vestra'. I doubt if this is correct.

4.1 *Politeness*

The element of *pudor* might—ought to—have been brought out better. After all, Priscillian was troubling Damasus in a cause which the latter had already been obliged to look into. He should have realized that Damasus might become huffy. Hence the tactic should have been for the complainants not only to be modest, but to be submissive. Like Jerome, who in his letters to the same Damasus (although as his former secretary he knew him well) always belittled himself, for instance pretending to be a sacrificial animal (*victima*), a sheep (*ovis*) in the shadow of the great shepherd of Rome, and speaking of his sins (*facinora*), while asking for advice concerning the Trinity.³³ Or as Sidonius Apollinaris did, after he had incurred the wrath of the dean of the Gallic bishops, Lupus, who felt passed over in the dedication of a book: ‘I beseech you to forgive this offence’, ‘I prefer to ask forgiveness rather than to disprove my guilt’. Lupus should please not consider it to be an ‘error of pride’—*superbia* being the exact opposite of *pudor*. Here too we encounter an anaphoric *nemo/nullus*-episode, but this time the excuse is wisely put in the mouth of an imaginary third: ‘Someone else would have said: “I haven’t preferred anyone to you, I haven’t written any special letter to anyone.”’³⁴ These happen to be examples from private correspondence. The conclusion seems justified that changing the register from an official petition to a personal letter would have entailed a complete change of tactics. It might have been worth the risk, though, especially for a non-conformist ascetic.

4.2 *Claiming*

Another problem is that Priscillian does not leave Damasus a loophole. For once undiplomatically, he claims him one hundred percent for his cause. First, Damasus’ involvement is expressly mentioned when, at the synod of Saragossa, ‘your letter, in which you commanded according to the precepts of the gospel that nothing should be judged against those who are absent and not questioned yet, particularly prevailed against the iniquitous [Priscillian’s opponents]’. Next, he is claimed as a witness for the defence: ‘... letters to bishops Hyginus and Symposius [both supporters of Priscillian], *whose lives you know personally*’ (my italics and translation). And finally, his personal authority is linked to the desired outcome: ‘We know and learn from you what is fitting

33 Jerome, *Ep.* 15, 16, 18A, 18B, 20, 21 (ed. Labourt, Budé: Paris 1949).

34 Sidonius, *Ep.* IX, 11, 1, *delicto huic ... supplico ignosci*; 7 *malo precari veniam quam reatum ... deprecari*; 1 *superbiae ... errorem*; 5 *dixisset alius: ‘neminem tibi praetuli, nullas ad ullum peculiares litteras dedi’*.

for priests, to the extent that we strive to prevent that, under the name of culprits, in your days—and you know this is a sacrilege—either churches may be deprived of catholic priests or priests of churches.³⁵ Priscillian pins him down regarding the desired outcome, no expulsion from office, not by means of a cautious request, but in the compelling form of a biblical citation: *in diebus vestris*, ‘in your days’. In the Prophets, ‘in your days’ is the time of God’s redemption, and it is applied by Paul to Christ.³⁶ The decision about the Priscillianist bishops is given an eschatological dimension: a perspective which is as preposterous as it is uncomfortable. The opposite policy might have been more to Priscillian’s advantage. For instance, it has been pointed out that Symmachus in his third *relatio* does *not* pin Valentinian down personally with regard to the decision he hopes for and which he overtly suggests. Thus, the addressee has a free hand.³⁷

4.3 Judicialization

A fundamental problem is the judicialization of the issue—which, however, was all but inevitable for both parties in the climate of the day. Priscillian does not succeed—and given the register of a petition could scarcely have succeeded—in avoiding the usual juridical make-up in qualifying heresies as well as his opponents, labeling them with terms like *nefas*, ‘abomination’ (of Arianism), *malefici*, ‘black magicians’ (of Manichaeans), *infamare*, ‘to dis-

35 35, 22 (33) *tua potissimum epistula contra inprobos praevalente, in qua iuxta evangelica iussa praeceperas, ne quid in absentes et inauditos decerneretur*; 40, 1 (120) *ad Hyginum et Symposium episcopos quorum vitam ipse novisti ... litteras*; 43, 8 (193) *novimus et ex vobis discimus, quid deceat sacerdotes, tantum ut ... repugnemus, ne sub nomine noxiorum in diebus vestris, quod nefas scitis, aut ecclesiae catholicis videntur sacerdotibus aut ecclesiis sacerdotes*.

36 Jer 19:9, Ezek 12:25, Joel 1:2, Hab 1:5 (cited by Paul in Acts 13:41). Editors hitherto seem not to have noticed this citation. An appeal to the tradition (*quod nefas scitis*) is not unusual in this kind of context; compare, e.g., Symmachus, *Relatio* 3, 2, (*temporum gloria*) *quae tunc maior est, cum vobis contra morem parentum intellegitis nil licere*, ‘(the glory of these times,) which is all the greater when you understand that you may not do anything contrary to the custom of your ancestors.’

37 M. Creese, *Letters to the Emperor: Epistolarity and Power Relations from Cicero to Symmachus* (PhD thesis, School of Classics, University of St Andrews, 2006. URL http://research-repository.st-andrews.ac.uk/bitstream/10023/316/1/mcreese_thesis.pdf), 180–181: ‘In the case that Symmachus’ ideal model for the emperor and his interaction with Rome is rejected by Valentinian II, the prefect has been cautious not to shape (or challenge) the imperial [sic] directly, nor has he claimed his images as his own construction but attributes them to those for whom he speaks.’

credit' (i.e. to accuse of heresy), *crimen*, 'crime' (for diverging theological views; together with a full-blown procedure: *reus*, *accusatus*, *convictus*, *damnatus*, 'defendant', 'accused', 'found guilty', 'condemned'). The problem with judicialization is that it makes the case public and embeds it outside the church in laws and lawsuits. In her book about 'orthodoxy and the courts', Humfress has pointed out how strongly late antique practice concerning orthodoxy is determined by judicial reasoning and categorizing, and that, because the correct confession is essential to public welfare,³⁸ dissidents come under categories which are punishable by law. A fresh group of dissenters is defined, and subsequently made punishable by being subsumed under an existing criminal category.³⁹ The concept of *infamia*, 'disgrace', already figures in Constantine's condemnation of Arius,⁴⁰ and the imperial constitutions speak of heresy as 'sacrilege', 'criminal religion', 'misbelief' (with an undertone of 'treachery'), and 'abominable superstition'.⁴¹

Such an attitude of the state 'creates' heresy: the judicial entanglements of 381 transformed Priscillian and his followers into Priscillianism. Priscillian did not manage to escape from this climate, and thus handed himself over unwillingly, not only to the ecclesiastical procedure, but in the end almost inevitably to the secular lawsuit which was to be his undoing.

38 *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 5, 40, 1 (a constitution against 'Manichaeans, or Phrygians, or Priscillianists', Rome, 407 CE), *ac primum quidem volumus esse publicum crimen, quia quod in religionem divinam committitur, in omnium fertur iniuriam*, 'To begin with, we want this to be a public crime, because an offence against religion is detrimental to everyone.'

39 C. Humfress, *Orthodoxy and the Courts in Late Antiquity* (Oxford 2007), 226–232 about classification, especially 226: 'The legal censure of divergent theological belief was achieved by defining a new group ... and branding it with an old name.' The 4th–6th-century handbooks of heresies, e.g., Epiphanius of Salamis' *Panarion* and Philastrius of Brescia's *Diversarum heresium liber*, belong to the same atmosphere.

40 Socrates, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I, 9, 30 Ἄρειος δίκαιός ἐστιν τὴν αὐτὴν ... ὑπέχειν ἀτιμίαν, 'it is just that Arius should undergo the like *infamia*'. Humfress, *Orthodoxy*, 225: '*Infamia* involved the diminution of the esteem in which a person was held in Roman society (*existimatio*)—those declared *infames* could be excluded from the right of making applications in civil and criminal trials or from holding certain offices, as well as more specific disqualifications.'

41 Humfress, *Orthodoxy*, 236: 'In the late Roman Imperial constitutions heresy is referred to variously as a *sacrilegium*; a *criminosa religio*; a *perfidia*; and a *nefaria superstitio*. Heretics were thus potentially punishable under already defined Roman law penalties.'

4.4 *Orthodox Restoration*

The two prelates to whom Priscillian applied have an agenda of their own. At the end of the fourth century, both Milan and Rome are engaged in establishing or strengthening their influence in the churches of the West. Contemporary examples include Siricius' *decretale Cum in unum* to Himerius of Tarragona on celibacy from 386,⁴² and Ambrose forging contacts, possibly in the same year, with the town of Rouen by presenting bishop Victricius with relics of Gervasius and Protasius.⁴³

This expansionist policy and its counterpart in the struggles on the home front have a common mainspring. In an illuminating reconstruction of the proceedings in Milan and Rome, Burrus has claimed that the underlying tension is the opposition between private and public:⁴⁴ conflicts that would have done little harm if they had remained private, became dangerous because they were scaled up to official and (church-)political dimensions. Especially Ambrose, but Damasus too, direct their energy towards 'establishing orthodoxy in [the] public domain'. Priscillian reinforces this reflex 'by his assertively public construction of episcopal authority', whereas he and his movement are simply a private group of ascetically minded Christians.

In this climate, Ambrose cannot afford alternatives and dissidents. In the same year 381, he wins the conflict with the Homoeans and the vacillating emperor Gratian over the restitution of the basilica which the latter's step-mother, the anti-Nicene empress Justina, had acquired for her party in 378, while, as we have seen, he also deals summarily with the homoean bishops in Illyricum. Then there is the conflict with the senate of Rome and its spokesman Symmachus over the altar of Victory, and the anti-Arian polemic in Ambrose's *De fide*.⁴⁵ Not unimportant: it is in Ambrose's circle and in the same years that Filastrius, in his catalogue of heresies, writes about 'abstinents in Gaul, Spain, and Aquitania, disciples of gnostics and Manichaeans', which must refer to the

42 See C. Hornung, 'Haeres Petri: Kontinuität und Wandel in der Bischofsnachfolge des Siricius von Rom', in J. Leemans et al. (eds.), *Episcopal Elections in Antiquity* (Berlin 2011), 375–388 (379–386).

43 Victricius, *De laude sanctorum* 6 (ed. Mulders and Demeulenaere, CCL 64, 1985). Interestingly, later, in his turn, this same Victricius was accused of heresy because of asceticism. He, however, had the bishop of Rome, Innocent I, on his side. See G.D. Dunn, 'Canonical Legislation on the Ordination of Bishops: Innocent I's Letter to Victricius of Rouen', in Leemans, *Episcopal Elections*, 145–166, esp. 148–155, also on the Priscillianist affair.

44 Burrus, *Making of a Heretic*, 79–80 and 84–92.

45 See note 8.

followers of Priscillian.⁴⁶ Charles Pietri spoke of nothing less than an ‘orthodox restoration.’⁴⁷

In principle, Rome (Damasus) was less outspoken and biased than Ambrose. A case in point is his former secretary’s, Jerome’s, initially neutral standpoint concerning Priscillian which probably reflects the original atmosphere in Rome.⁴⁸ However, Damasus changed sides in order to extend papal authority in the slipstream of Ambrose’s success.⁴⁹ The least we can say is that Priscillian came at the wrong moment.⁵⁰

5 Violence

5.1 Reason and Violence

The analysis of the *Liber ad Damasum* has shown that the petition was skilfully composed and would have been adequate in more favourable circumstances. I have also explored the theoretical alternatives Priscillian had at his disposal, which proved to be marginal. The simple truth is that the climate of the day and

46 *De haeresibus* 84: *sunt in Galliis et Hispaniis et Aquitania veluti abstinentes, qui et Gnosticorum et Manichaeorum particulam perniciosissimam aequae sequuntur eandemque non dubitant praedicare*, ‘there are abstinentes in Gaul, Spain, and Aquitania, who follow the party of gnostics and Manichaeans alike and do not hesitate to advertise it’ (PL 12, 1196B).

47 Pietri, ‘Häresie’, 447–460. Contemporaneously in the East Theodosius and his co-emperors published the decree *Cunctos populos* which made the Nicene faith of the bishops of Rome and Alexandria obligatory (*Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 1, 2; 380 CE), and summoned a council at Constantinople which went on to define orthodoxy (381 CE). One might as well speak of a new phase in the relationship between church and state.

48 See note 5.

49 Burrus, *Making of a Heretic*, 89: ‘In the context of such factionalized heterogeneity, facilitated by complex networks of patronage, within which diverse competing movements flourished, Damasus—himself a most skillful broker of patronage relationships—had moved to consolidate a more centralized episcopal authority, which aggressively constructed itself as both public and orthodox over against opponents who were correspondingly hereticized and privatized.’ Hornung, ‘Haeres Petri’, 375 adds as a further incentive for Damasus the fact that his opponent in the episcopal succession, Ursinus, seems to have been still active.

50 Audiences were refused more often, e.g., Symmachus, *Relatio* 3, 1: *cui ... divi principis denegata est ab improbis audientia*, ‘(Symmachus) to whom an audience with his Majesty (the predecessor of Gratian) was denied by malicious people (Ambrose and Damasus among others!)’ (ed. Seeck, MGH AA 6, 1). Symmachus as well as Palladius and Priscillian failed due to the ‘orthodox restoration’.

the real issues at stake made this move futile. Why then write a petition if you know beforehand you do not stand a chance? I guess that the reason for this was a tactical one, namely to deprive his opponents of the argument that his movement did not care about the rules of the church. Meanwhile we can surmise that the delegation had been doing its utmost—including using bribes—to secure support among the entourage of Damasus (the all-important ‘intimates and clients’ we have met earlier), or among his opponents, for that matter. What went wrong in Rome was successful in Milan. While Ambrose refused, the *magister officiorum* Macedonius proved willing to nullify the rescript which had justified the deposition of the Priscillianist bishops.

The discussion had been reduced to bare-knuckled strategic wrestling. Being left without any negotiating space, the parties headed for a clash which was to leave them both empty-handed. Priscillian lacked the network to be effective, and in the end to save his life, while the official church, although powerful, achieved the exact opposite of what it wanted by locking him out. It lost control of the case, which ended up in the hands of the secular authority ... and thus descended into extreme violence.

The exceptionality of Priscillian's case is most markedly present in its violent ending. Obviously, given the theological climate of the day, one could not expect a reasoned dogmatic compromise, nor was the position of the Priscillianist bishops tenable in the long run. Ambrose, Damasus, Martin—the official church—, all preferred a canonical disciplinary solution. Even the appeal to the emperor might have resulted in a moderate sentence.⁵¹ But then ... this deadly violence.

5.2 *Law*

In the heated discussion during the years after the trial, this violent end was ascribed to the insistence of the implacable bishops in Maximus' immediate environment, and ultimately to the personal decision of the usurper. Torture, the opponents of the sentence said, was applied during the trial, capital punishment was inflicted on no fewer than seven Priscillianists, and they paint the cruel spectacle of Euchrotia ‘being dragged to her execution with a hook’.⁵² Even when we take into account the evident bias of these reports, the total implacability is striking. Surprisingly, scholars do not make much of this aspect, and are content to cite the seemingly appropriate legal sources. The applicabil-

51 According to Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicon* II, 50, 6, Maximus promised Martin *nihil cruentum in reos constituendum*, ‘that no bloody sentence would be passed on the culprits’.

52 Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicon* II, 50, 7–8, 51; Pacatus, *Panegyricus* 2, 29, 2–3.

ity of these sources, however, is by no means self-evident. I would say, instead, that here we have another proof of the contrived nature of the death penalty in the case of the Priscillianists.

The situational and geographically precise character of Roman legislation is well known.⁵³ Laws were always issued on specific occasions and were in principle limited in scope. Hence, it is methodically dubious to pick a series of disparate sections of Roman law and imperial rescripts and constitutions, and present them as 'the law' on a quite different occasion. This, however, is exactly what is often done in the case of (black) magic.

The most cited sections come from *Codex Theodosianus* IX, 16, *De maleficis et mathematicis et ceteris similibus*, 'Concerning magicians, astrologers, and the like'. Scholars also refer to Domitian's letter to the proconsul of Africa against the Manichaeans, probably from 302 CE, which led to their prosecution. To begin with the latter: the emperor wanted them 'to be burnt in the flames together with their detestable books'.⁵⁴ Manichaeans were notoriously associated with magic,⁵⁵ and the Priscillianist movement was easily associated with Manichaeism. However, there is no mention of Manichaeism whatsoever in the motivation of the sentence of Priscillian, nor is the old African prosecution being applied in any way as a precedent.

As to the regulations concerning magic proper in the Theodosian Code: they range from 316 to 409 CE. Five out of twelve, dating from the 50s to the 80s, prescribe the death penalty for magicians and astrologers, and their clients. The majority, however, are cautious or even mild. In IX, 16, 6, from 357, the *praefectus praetorio* receives an instruction for the screening, if necessary under torture, of the imperial retinue: 'Although the bodies of high-ranking officials are exempt from torment ... if one is found to be practising magic in my retinue or that of the *caesar*, his dignity cannot protect him against torture and

53 See, e.g., R. Lizzi Testa, 'Legislazione imperiale e reazione pagana: i limiti del conflitto', in P. Brown and R. Lizzi Testa, *Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire: The Breaking of a Dialogue (IVth–VIth Century A.D.)* (Münster 2011), 467–491 (467 n. 3). At greater length on how to use Roman law as a historical source, J.D. Harries, *Law and Empire in Late Antiquity* (Cambridge 1999), 4 and 24–25.

54 Document in R. Rees, *Diocletian and the Tetrarchy* (Edinburgh 2004), 174–175. The ban on Manichaeism was renewed by Valentinian I (*Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 5, 3 (372 CE)) and Theodosius I (*Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 5, 7 (381 CE)).

55 See M.P. Canepa, 'The Art and Ritual of Manichaean Magic: Text, Object and Image from the Mediterranean to Central Asia', in H.G. Meredith (ed.), *Objects in Motion: The Circulation of Religion and Sacred Objects in the Late Antique and Byzantine World* (Oxford 2011), 73–88.

torment.⁵⁶ Contrastingly, section IX, 16, 12, the last one, from 409, is mild, and content with deportation. Other sections are concerned with a careful procedure, and with distinguishing black and white magic (under circumstances allowed). This varied approach once again proves the situational character of Roman law. In the case of Priscillian too, there was surely no self-evident verdict beforehand, and torture was not compulsory either. People of the social rank of Priscillian, *honorati*, were normally exempt from interrogation under torture, and the death penalty was rarely inflicted on them. If so, it was because of *crimen maiestatis*, *lèse majesté*, and, more in general, because of an immediate danger to the state in the person of the emperor.⁵⁷ Hence, applying torture to the Priscillianists on the strength of an instruction like IX, 16, 6 would seem perverse as these people had no function in the administration, and did not belong to the imperial court; they had never even seen the emperor.

Their being tortured and the death penalty are thus quite special, and tied up with the specific circumstances. As Brown has pointed out, the accusation of magic pops up in 'pockets of uncertainty and competition in a society increasingly committed to a vested hierarchy in church and state'. 'This conflict passed through its most acute phase in the fourth century'. Its victims were bearers of 'anomalous power', having an 'ill-defined status', such as professors of rhetoric and poets.⁵⁸ We can easily classify a non-conformist like Priscillian in the same category.

The heightened tension at the court of the usurper Magnus Maximus, with so many persons and interests at stake at the same time, was the powder keg which eventually exploded in everybody's face. Instead of sagacious conflict management and a tenable solution, the process escalated in two forced final

56 *Codex Theodosianus* IX, 16, 6 (357 CE), *Etsi excepta tormentis sunt corpora honoribus praedictorum ... si quis magus ... in comitatu meo vel caesaris fuerit deprehensus, praesidio dignitatis cruciatus et tormenta non fugiat*. The section then prescribes that, if the accused keeps denying, he be punished on the 'horse' (*eculeo*) and with 'claws' (*ungulis*); the latter may have inspired the 'hook' on Euchrotia's last journey. For the datation, see Pietri, 'Häresie', 492 n. 253.

57 See, e.g., Ammianus XXVIII, 1, 11 with the comment ad loc. in J. den Boeft et al., *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXVIII* (Leiden 2011). The question has a long history. For the situation in the Republic and under the Principate, see P. Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1970), 109–110.

58 P. Brown, 'Sorcery, Demons, and the Rise of Christianity from Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages', in M. Douglas (ed.), *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations* (London 1970), 17–45, (also in P. Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (London 1972), 119–146). For a recent survey of the issue, see A. Lotz, *Der Magiekonflikt in der Spätantike* (Bonn 2005).

rounds full of procedural squabbles, aggravated by Maximus' pronouncement 'that Priscillian and his followers ought to be put to death'.⁵⁹

Priscillian lost his cause and his head, the bishops who had brought the charge lost their credibility, the church at large lost control of a doctrinal case, and the newfangled emperor, who could flatter himself with a short-lived triumph, soon lost his status when he was eliminated by Theodosius.

59 Sulpicius Severus, *Chronicon* II, 50, 8, *Priscillianum sociosque eius capite damnari oportere*.

Quid dicam de vindicando vel non vindicando? (Ep. 95, 3). Augustine's Legitimation of Coercion in the Light of His Roles of Mediator, Judge, Teacher and Mystagogue

Paul van Geest

1 Introduction

In 389 Augustine still wrote that Jesus did not force people but rather convinced and exhorted them. Towards the end of his life he corrected this insight by pointing out that at the time he had forgotten that Jesus had driven out all those who sold and bought in the temple.¹ Augustine's final insight that coercion and violence on behalf of the state may be legitimised has already occupied many scholars.² Developed in the period of disputes with the Donatists,

1 *De vera religione* 16, 31: *Nihil egit vi, sed omnia suadendo et monendo*; *Retractationes* 1, 13, 6: *Alio loco in eo quod dixi de Domino Iesu Christo: Nihil egit vi, sed omnia suadendo et monendo, non mihi occurrerat quod vendentes et ementes flagellando eiecit de templo*.

2 For earlier and other insights regarding this theme see: J.R. Bowlin, 'Augustine on Justifying Coercion', *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* 17 (1997), 49–70; P. Brown, 'Religious coercion in the Later Roman Empire: the Case of North Africa', in: P. Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (New York 1972), 301–332; P. Brown, 'Saint Augustine's Attitude to Religious Coercion', *Journal of Roman Studies* 54 (1964), 107–116 (also published in: P. Brown, *Religion and Society in the Age of Saint Augustine* (New York 1972), 260–278); D.X. Burt, 'Augustine on the Morality of Violence: Theoretical Issues and Applications', in *Congresso internazionale su S. Agostino nel XVI centenario della conversione* (Roma 1987), 25–54; R. Crespin, *Ministère et Sainteté. Pastorale du clergé et solution de la crise donatiste dans la vie de saint Augustin* (Paris 1965); W.H.C. Frend, 'Donatismus', *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 4 (1959), 128–147; M. Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ: Religious Violence in the Christian Roman Empire* (Transformation of the Classical Heritage 39; Berkeley 2005); M. Gaumer, A. Dupont, 'Algunos elementos para entender el cambio y la justificación agustiniana de la coerción religiosa efectuada por el estado y su contexto dentro de la polémica donatista del Norte de África', *Augustinus* 54/2 (2009) 345–371 ('Understanding Augustine's Changing Justification for State-sponsored Religious Coercion and its Context Within Donatist North Africa', *Augustinus* 55 (2009), <https://lirias.kuleuven.be/bitstream/>

this has later been regarded as tragic, because it was rightly concluded that Augustine's theory of coercion was not only a 'théorie d'occasion',³ but that he also considered peace in his community to be guaranteed by violence.⁴ It was also pointed out that *cogite* (*coge*) *entrare* in Luke 14:23, to support the use of force in matters of religion, did not have a decisive influence on his thinking.⁵ In another contribution I have gone into the strategy envisaged by Augustine in his final legitimization of violence and coercion and its underlying

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- 123456789/220345/1); M. Gaumer, A. Dupont, 'Donatist North Africa and the Beginning of Religious Coercion by Christians: A New Analysis', *La Ciudad de Dios. Revista Agustiniiana* 223/2 (May/August 2010) 445–466; E.L. Grasmück, *Coercitio. Staat und Kirche im Donatistenstreit* (Bonn 1964); E. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama: A Study of the North African Episcopate in the Age of Saint Augustine* (Oxford 2008), 83–187; E.M. Himbury, 'Augustine and Religious Persecution', in: M. Garner, J.S. Martin (eds.), *St. Augustine—The Man who made the West* (Melbourne 1990), 33–37; H. Jans, 'De verantwoording van geloofsdwang tegenover kettters volgens Augustinus' correspondenties', *Bijdragen* 22 (1961) 133–163, 247–263; R. Joly, 'Saint Augustin et l'intolerance religieuse', *Revue Belge de Philosophie et d'Histoire* 33 (1955), 278; E. Lamirande, *Church, State and Toleration: An Intriguing Change of Mind in Augustine* (The Saint Augustine Lecture 1974; Villanova 1975); V. Monachino, 'El pensamiento de San Agustín sobre el empleo de la fuerza política al servicio de la religión', in (no ed.), *Contribución Española a una Misionología Agustiniiana* (Burgos 1955), 86–100; F.H. Russell, 'Persuading the Donatists: Augustine's Coercion by Words', in: W.E. Klingshirn, M. Vessey (eds.), *The Limits of Ancient Christianity. Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R.A. Markus* (Michigan 1999), 115–130; B.D. Shaw, *Sacred Violence: African Christians and Sectarian Hatred in the Age of Augustine* (Cambridge, New York 2011); E. Tenström, *Donatisten und Katholiken: soziale, wirtschaftliche und politische Aspekten einer Nordafrikanischen Kirchenspaltung* (Göteborg 1964); G. Willis, *Saint Augustine and the Donatist Controversy* (London 1950), 127–135.
- 3 Cf. P. Monceaux, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, part 4–7, Paris 1912–1923, vol. 7, 229 and 217: 'Le recours au pouvoir séculier n'était pas pour Augustin une question de principe, mais une question d'opportunité, puis une question de méthode.'
- 4 Cf. D. Müller, 'Aspekte der Ketzerverfolgung unter den Römischen Kaisern bis Justinian', in: H.G.B. Teule and J. Verheyden (eds.), *Heretics and Heresies in the Ancient Church and in Eastern Christianity: Studies in Honour of Adelbert Davids* (Eastern Christian Studies 10; Leuven 2011), 175–193 (191).
- 5 Cf. Lamirande, *Church, State and Toleration*, 51–58. Cf. *Ep.* 185, 6, 24; *Contra Gaudentium* 1, 25, 28 and *De consensu evangelistarum* 2, 71 (different context); *Ep.* 93, 2, 5; 173, 10; *Sermo* 112. It was emphasised by Russell that for Augustine *cogo* was strongly connected with *cogito* and *colligo*, and so does not only mean 'compel by physical force', but is also an action leading to *colligo* or *cogito* and internalisation, Cf. F.H. Russell, 'Persuading the Donatists: Augustine's Coercion by Words', in: W.E. Klingshirn, M. Vessey (eds.), *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R.A. Markus* (Michigan 1999), 115–130 (116–119, 121).

principles.⁶ In this contribution an attempt will be made on the one hand to outline the nuances in the course of his development and on the other to describe the various roles adopted by Augustine.

It is, by the way, sensible to establish in advance that the Church Father has never exactly indicated what he understands by 'violence' and to what degree he wants to prescribe it or had it applied. With Augustine the Latin *coercitio* does not have the meaning of English (means of) 'coercion', but is rather linked to *correctio-correptio* ('correction', 'admonition').⁷ Force was a generally accepted means in all areas of society and bishops too had the possibility to lead their flock by means of force.⁸ They could allow themselves to be intolerant; the question was 'only' whether they gave shape to their intolerance in an acceptable way.⁹ Precisely because it was permitted to administer severe corporal punishment to heretics, it is all the more remarkable that in *Ep.* 133 Augustine says that the harshest punishment he ever imposed on Donatist bishops was to have them beaten with a wooden rod.¹⁰ He did not approve of beating with iron rods, as he thought this out of proportion.

In order to be able to interpret Augustine's course of development, it is important first to sketch a very brief outline of the relationship between the Church and the State with respect to legitimising state interference in ecclesiastical affairs before and during the days of Augustine.

2 The Acceptance of State Interference in Ecclesiastical Affairs

In the Roman empire religious movements were not thwarted and they could in fact prosper, if only they were not opposed to the state religion. However, the decree issued by emperor Decius in 249, that all inhabitants of his empire had to sacrifice to the traditional gods, formed a serious threat to the Christian religion, sometimes even resulting in torture and violence.

Tertullian († 230) had raised the point that it belongs to the rights of man and his free nature to worship whoever or whatever he wants. A religion

6 P. van Geest, 'Timor est servus caritatis (*Sermo* 156, 13–14): Augustine's vision on coercion in the process of the return of heretics and the fundamental principles', in: A. Dupont, M. Gaumer, M. Lamberigts (eds), *The Uniquely African Controversy: Studies on Donatist Christianity* (Late Antique History and Religion; Louvain 2013, in press).

7 P. Brown, 'St. Augustine's attitude to Religious Coercion', 274–275.

8 J. Bowlin, 'Augustine on Justifying Coercion', 51.

9 Brown, 'Religious coercion in the Later Roman Empire: the Case of North Africa', 327–328.

10 See also *Retractationes* 2, 5, 32.

has to be accepted spontaneously and may not be imposed by force.¹¹ The Roman Christian author Lactantius (†320) pointed out that Christians do not force others to worship the Christian God, nor are they angry if others in fact do not worship Him.¹² Later Hilary of Poitiers (†367) complained that the Church wanted to arouse faith by means of imprisonment and thus by force.¹³ Athanasius (†373), too, recognised that the truth taught by Christ, 'is not preached with swords or with darts, nor by means of soldiers, but by persuasion and counsel'.¹⁴ He blames the Arians precisely because of their use of violence and links this to their lack of piety and orthodoxy.¹⁵

Ambrose (†397), however, considered the destruction of idols and the forced closure of temples to be justified.¹⁶ Augustine's teacher thought that state interference in religious affairs is acceptable and even justified. However, he lived in the period after emperor Constantine's Edict of Toleration (from 313), when pagan violence against Christians had become very rare and the roles had been reversed. Laws were promulgated making it possible to demolish pagan temples, but no more than that: the pagans were not to be persecuted or tortured. So Ambrose approves of the demolition of temples but nowhere in his works does he legitimise violence against people.

At this point, it should already be remarked that Augustine shows himself to be loyal to his master in taking over from him the idea of the demolition of temples without any comment.¹⁷ It is therefore quite strange that he reproaches the Donatists for destroying pagan temples and disturbing pagan ceremonies. In addition he seems to feel uneasy towards the Donatist bishop Gaudence of Thamugadi, because both the Donatists and the Catholics have destroyed pagan temples.¹⁸ He also shows himself to be loyal to Ambrose, however, by adamantly resisting capital punishment for pagans who attempted to restore

11 Tertullian, *Ad Scapulam* 2, 1–2: *Tamen humani generis et naturalis potestatis est unicuique quod putaverit colere; nec alii obest aut prodest alterius religio. Sed nec religionis est cogere religionem, suae sponte suscipi debeat, non vi, cum et hostiae ab animo libenti expostulentur* (from 212).

12 Lactantius, *Divinae institutiones* 5, 2 (from 303–313).

13 Hilary of Poitiers, *Contra Auxentium*, 3–4.

14 Athanasius, *Historia Arianorum*, in PG 25, 351.

15 Cf. Athanasius, *Historia Arianorum ad Monachos*, in PG 25, 729–732, esp.: *Piae religionis proprium est non cogere sed suadere. Siquidem Dominus non cogens sed libertatem suam voluntati permittens dicebat quidem uulgo omnibus: 'Si quis uult uenire post me; Apostolus uero: 'Num et uos abire uultis' [Latin translation]. See also 736–737.*

16 Ambrose, *De obitu Theodosii*, 38 (written in 395).

17 Cf. *Sermo* 105, 10, 13; *De consensu evangelistarum* 1, 21; 1, 41.

18 *Contra Epistulam Parmeniani* 1, 9, 15; *Contra Gaudentium* 1, 38, 51.

their cult and committed violence against Catholics.¹⁹ Apparently Augustine is of the opinion that pagans may never be threatened with violence, whereas this does not hold for fellow Christians like the Donatists. This seems to be contradictory, but we will see later that this is not the case.

The adoptionist bishop of Antioch, Paul of Samosata († 270) is regarded to be the first victim of the cooperation between church and state. Accused of heresy by fellow bishops, he was driven away from his town by emperor Aurelian, be it for other reasons: the emperor considered him to be dangerous to the state because of his relation with Zenobia, the queen of Palmyra, notorious for her lust for power. Eusebius' *Historia Ecclesiastica* reveals that state interference in ecclesiastical affairs was accepted and even justified by ecclesiastical authors.²⁰

Whereas in this respect the priests were mainly concerned about safeguarding orthodoxy, statesmen rather strove for political unity. The two went hand in hand. Thus the persecution of Christians and Manicheans by Diocletian (abdication 305) may be reduced to his striving for unity in his empire, also by means of the Roman religion. Emperor Constantine regarded the constantly expanding Catholic Church as a reliable partner in his striving for this unity. Therefore he convened ecclesiastical meetings and granted his imperial approval to the decisions taken by the bishops.²¹

With respect to the Donatists his strategy was to let the Church first recover her unity herself. The Donatist schism only became a fact when the ordination of Caecilianus, who had been elected primate of Africa in Carthage, in 311 or 312, was declared invalid by seventy bishops of Numidia, because one of the consecrators was suspected of being a *traditor*.²² They elected Majorinus as primate

19 *Ep.* 91, 9; 104, 1.

20 Cf. R. Markus, 'From Rome to the Barbarian Kingdoms (330–700)', in J. Mannes (ed.), *The Oxford History of Christianity* (Oxford 2002), 78: 'In his [i.e. Eusebius'] eyes Christianity and the Roman Empire were made for each other. God's providential intensions were realized by Constantine: Augustus has united the world under the Roman rule, Christ under God's and God welded together the two unities in a Christian society which was, in principal, universal.'

21 R. Lim, 'Christian Triumph and Controversy', in: G. Bowersock, P. Brown, O. Grabar (eds.), *Interpreting Late Antiquity: Essays on the Postclassical World* (Cambridge, MA 2001), 200

22 Cf. Augustine, *Ep.* 185, 1, 4–5 and *passim*. For the history of the Donatists see especially S. Lancel, 'Donatistae', in C. Mayer, K.-H. Chelius, A. Grote (eds.) in *Augustinus-Lexikon* II (Basel 2002), 606–622. Cf. also: *Monumenta vetera ad Donatistarum historiam pertinentia*, in PL 8, col. 673–784. The Donatists have not left us many documents. Cf. W.H.C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (Oxford 1952), 337. It should also be remarked that the *Epistula ad presbyteros et diaconos* by Petilianus, the *Epistulae ad Dulcitium* by Gaudentius and *De baptismo* by Fulgentius were distilled by P. Monceaux

and the latter's successor, the charismatic Donatus, subsequently structured the movement named after him. When it turned out that neither Caecilianus of Carthage, nor an ecclesiastical law court in Rome and not even the general synod in Arles (314), managed to restore unity, Constantine himself decided *post episcopalia iudicia* in favour of Caecilianus.²³ In 316–317 the emperor made reconciliation with the Catholic Church compulsory.²⁴ When the influence of co-emperor Licinius, who was not a Christian, had definitely waned in 324, Constantine tried to bring about the unity in his empire by favouring the Catholics. Not in the last place in order to fill up the imperial treasury, Donatists were subjected to various taxes and Donatist basilicas were impropriated, just to mention two examples.²⁵ All the same this did not prevent Donatus from requesting emperor Constans to recognise him as bishop of Carthage, in 346. However, the imperial commission, headed by Paul and Macarius, took the part of the Catholics. From that moment onwards the Donatists sneeringly called the Catholic Church *pars macariana*.²⁶ This was all the more reason for Constans to enact a law in 347 in which unity with the Catholic Church was made obligatory.²⁷ The imperial commissioner Macarius did not eschew violence either in his efforts to make the *pars Donati* return to the Catholic Church. It was in the days of Macarius that the Donatists went underground and identified themselves with Jewish and especially Christian martyrs, the *ecclesia martyrum*,²⁸ which had been persecuted since the death of Abel, till the time of Herod, and which embodied the true Israel.²⁹

Already a few years before the birth of Augustine in 354, the hostilities were characterised by violence on both sides.³⁰ In his early youth the Donatist

from quotations from Augustine, *Histoire littéraire de l'Afrique chrétienne*, parts 4–7 (Paris 1912–1923), esp. part 5 (1920): *Optat et les premiers écrivains donatistes*, 311–328; 329–333; 335–339. Cf. also M. Tilley, 'Redefining Donatism: Moving Forward', *Augustinian Studies* 42 (2011), 21–32.

23 Cf. *Contra Cesconium* 3, 72, 82 and *Ep.* 88, 2–3; *Ep.* 105, 8; *Ep.* 93, 4, 14–15. cf. Grasmück, *Coercitio*, 29, 38; Y. Congar, 'La législation impériale sur le Donatisme jusqu'en 400', in *Bibliothèque Augustinienne* 28 (1963), 731–733.

24 *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 6, 2.

25 Müller, 'Aspekte der Ketzerverfolgung', 179–182.

26 Cf. *Ep.* 49, 3; *Ep.* 23, 6: *tempora macariana*; *Contra litteras Petiliani* 2, 39, 92: *pars macariana*.

27 *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 6, 2.

28 *Contra Epistulam Parmeniani* 1, 8, 13; 2, 92, 202–206; *Ep.* 44, 3, 5.

29 In his great works against Donatism Augustine has always negated this claim, cf. *Ep.* 185, 2, 6; 185, 2, 10; *Sermo ad Caes. eccl.* 7.

30 Cf. the historiography of Optatus of Milevis, the first historian of the Donatists, in: CSEL 26, 81–85. On the part of the Donatists, Marculus is victimised, 29 December 347, seven years

Church was dominant for a short period in Numidia, during the reign of Julian the Apostate (361–363). This changed in 377, when a law was enacted denying church buildings to those practising the Donatist rebaptism.³¹ That Augustine, in complete contrast with the strategy he developed later, did not seem to be impressed by coercion or the threat of violence in 377 became clear when, during the reign of Valentinian I (364–375), the persecution of the Manicheans, still considered to be dangerous to the state, flared up again. He remained *auditor* with them. Nor did the enactment of a law in 380, according to which not adhering to the Catholic faith founded on the apostle Peter almost coincided with lese-majesty, make him decide to leave the Manicheans.³² Later he was to leave them for other reasons.

The relationship between the Catholics and the Donatists, which Augustine, as a young priest, helped to shape as from 391, may be called complicated. In the late 380s, early 390s, when the invitation to dialogue on the part of the emperor Theodosius still took place without the threat of coercion, both Catholics and Donatists sent ambassadors to the emperor, the Donatists even continuing to do so after they had been declared heretics.³³ All the same the emperor Theodosius († 395) prescribed a fine of ten gold pounds for heretical clergy, landowners and procurators of imperial estates who knowingly allowed heretics to conduct services on those estates. A lessee of servile status was to be beaten with clubs and then deported.³⁴ As around 395 the Donatists usually belonged to the regional establishment, however, and enjoyed the support of imperial administrators in North Africa, the laws were not complied with. In 398 the pro-Donatist *comes* Gildo paid with his life for his rebellion against Honorius and a year later his estates were confiscated.³⁵ Coercion and violence occurred on both sides. Catholic missionaries who, as from 401, travelled across the country in order to refute the inconsistencies in Donatist teaching met with violence.³⁶

before the birth of Augustine (*Passio Marculi*, PL 8, 760–766; cf. *Contra Cresconium* 3, 49, 54).

31 *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 6, 2, 9 (377). Cf. E.T. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama: A Study of the North African Episcopate* (Oxford 2008), 145.

32 *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 1, 2.

33 Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 85, 97.

34 Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 102–104; *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 5, 21.

35 Cf. *Codex Theodosianus* IX, 42, 16; IX, 42, 19.

36 Cf. *Ad catholicos fratres* 19, 50; 20, 54; *Contra Cresconium* 3, 42, 46. Cf. Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 258–259.

It may be deduced from Augustine's *Ep.* 66 that, similarly, the eighty residents of a village near the estate of the Donatist bishop Crispin met with pressure, when this bishop forced them to be baptised by him in 402. Equally coercively the Donatists were summoned to take part in a conference in Carthage, in 403. Augustine drew up the document.³⁷ In the same year the Catholics appealed to anti-heretical legislation, but they emphasised that the *pars donati* should be admonished in a kindly manner, so that insight in the importance of unity might result rather than aggression.³⁸

Nevertheless, in the spring of 404, Augustine's close friend Possidius, bishop of Calama († ca. 437) was attacked by *circumcelliones*, under the leadership of the Donatist priest Crispin.³⁹ The Donatist bishop Crispin refused to punish his namesake whereupon, in a lawsuit, this bishop was held responsible for the priest and convicted of heresy.⁴⁰ He was sentenced to the (Theodosian) fine of ten pounds. When the bishop appealed to the imperial court, the emperor Honorius († 423) decided that Crispin and the Donatists came under the anti-heresy law and had to pay the fine; moreover the proconsul and his staff were also fined, because they did not enforce their earlier verdict.⁴¹ Still the Catholics could not trust the judiciary. The maltreatment of Restitutius, who had returned to the Catholic Church, induced Augustine to bring a charge against the Donatist bishop Proculeianus, but the latter appealed to the municipal *gesta*, in which the dismissal of the case had been recorded before. Augustine considered the option of going to the imperial court, but decided not to, by his own account not to upset the peaceful dialogue between the local parties.⁴²

Between 12 February and 3 March 405, emperor Honorius promulgated an edict and three *decreta*, the edict being the most harsh of all. The Donatists were proclaimed subject to all anti-heretical legislation and were obliged to be reconciled to the Catholic Church.⁴³ Donatist churches and houses where Donatist services were held, could be confiscated by the imperial treasury. In addition to these tightened measures, the forced exile of Primianus, the

37 Cf. *PL* 9, 1200–1201.

38 Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 259; see also P. van Geest, 'Timor est servus caritatis (*Sermo* 156, 13–14). Augustine's vision on coercion in the process of the return of heretics and the fundamental principles', in press.

39 *Contra Cresconium* 3, 46, 50; *Ep.* 105, 4.

40 Cf. *Contra Cresconium* 3, 45, 49 (invitation dialogue); 3, 46, 50–3, 47, 51 (attack on Possidius and lawsuit).

41 Possidius, *Vita* 12, 9. Cf. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 133–134.

42 *Ep.* 88, 6–7.

43 *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 5, 38.

primate of the Donatists, and of the Donatist bishop Petilianus caused the Donatists to harden themselves.⁴⁴ Until 407 the violence against Catholic bishops and priests, from which Augustine himself only just escaped between September and December 403, because he had taken the wrong road, was carefully planned; the degree to which injury and humiliation were to be inflicted was well thought out.⁴⁵ However, in 407, 408, and 411 they proceeded to murdering their opponents, in spite of the fact that in 409 Honorius had prescribed prosecution for crimes against Catholic bishops.⁴⁶

Even though the Catholic 'strategy' consisted of waiting for the death of a Donatist bishop to take over his diocese,⁴⁷ the hardening of the Donatists' policy did not fail to have effect. A Catholic bishop declared that if someone mentioned the name of Donatus in his diocese, a stoning would take place.⁴⁸

When in 408 the pro-imperial general Stilicho fell from power, the Donatists thought for a short while that the anti-heretical legislation was no longer effective,⁴⁹ but in spite of the many difficulties in Gaul and the threat of Alaric in Rome, emperor Honorius summoned a joint conference in 411. At this conference the Donatists did not immediately respond to the unexpected invitation by Marcellinus, the imperial secretary of state and a friend of Augustine, to return to the Catholic Church, which was a reason for the emperor to take more anti-Donatist measures.⁵⁰ All previous decrees enacted for the benefit of the Catholic Church were to be fully enforced.⁵¹ At this conference in Carthage (411) Possidius succeeded in winning over the competent authorities to his view: in

44 Cf. *Sermo* 2; *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 101, 9 (exile); *Retractationes*. 2, 27 (hardening).

45 Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 141: 'The confrontations with Catholic personnel, carefully choreographed, were humiliating, but halted before they proved fatal.' The confrontations consisted of undressing, rolling in mud and blood or a parade. The tortured remained *semivivos* according to Augustine (*Contra Cresconium* 3, 42, 46). Cf. also Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 134–142. For the assault on Augustine see, *Sermo* 26, in F. Dolbeau, *Vingt-six sermons au peuple d'Afrique* (Paris 1996), 354–356.

46 *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 2, 31.

47 *Gesta conlationis Carthaginensis* 1, 129; 1, 143; 1, 121 (CCSL 154A).

48 *Gesta conlationis Carthaginensis* 1, 33.

49 *Ep.* 108, 5, 14.

50 The skirmishes between the 284 Donatist and the 286 Catholic bishops have been recorded. Augustine has also left us a detailed account, in—among other documents—his *Breviculus conlationis cum Donatistis*. Cf. *Gesta conlationis Carthaginensis Anno 411* and the Edict of January 412, *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 5, 52.

51 *Codex Theodosianus* XVI, 11, 3. Cf. also Brown, 'Religious coercion in the Later Roman Empire: the Case of North Africa', 305–307.

the light of the legislation promulgated by emperor Theodosius, the Donatists were to be considered heretics.⁵²

Thus the Donatist power was finally broken. To bring this about, however, force had proved to be indispensable. The mingling of state power and ecclesiastical power turned out to have been of decisive importance in the struggle between the Catholic Church and the Donatists,⁵³ as imperial decisions were not only supported by the ecclesiastical leaders but the measures taken were also carried out by them.⁵⁴ It is striking, however, that in his texts Augustine never writes triumphantly about this victory. It may be the case that he was preoccupied with the Pelagians.⁵⁵ It is also possible that he knew that the Donatists still formed an important factor. Long after his days, in the sixth century, Gregory the Great († 604) was to speak with disgust about a practice that still occurred then: rebaptism.⁵⁶ We may conclude from this that even after Augustine's death (in 430), there were still Donatists. However this be, the question arises as to what Augustine's role was in legitimising coercion and violence against the Donatists.

3 Augustine's Role in the Contacts with the Donatists and the Development towards *coge entrare* (s. 112)

It is generally assumed that until 400–403 Augustine recommended exclusively peaceful means to limit Donatist influence and to let the Donatists return to the *Catholica*. It was only after these years that he changed his mind and began to legitimise state interventions with coercion and force. He did this first to protect the Catholics from repression by the Donatists and subsequently to actively force the Donatists to return to the unity of the Catholic Church.⁵⁷ This change may additionally be reduced to a conviction, developed by Augustine at a much earlier stage: he was of the opinion that every worldly ruler had

52 Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 108–109.

53 M. Gaddis, *There Is No Crime for Those Who Have Christ*, 133.

54 J. Bowlin, 'Augustine on Justifying Coercion', 52.

55 J. O'Donnell, *Augustine: A New Biography* (New York 2005), 15.

56 Gregory the Great, *Epistulae* 2, 3.

57 Cf. Lamirande, *Church, State and Toleration*, 12–13, 18. See also A. Dupont, 'Religieuze verdraagzaamheid bij Augustinus. Een intrigerende verandering in Augustinus' verhouding tot de donatisten. Van vredelievende overreding naar de rechtvaardiging van dwangmaatregelen', in B. Bruning (ed.), *Oorlog en vrede. Augustinus in confrontatie met het heden* (Leuven 2006), 30–47.

to promote the interests of the Church and that the Christian emperors were pre-eminently instruments of God to discipline heretical factions.⁵⁸ Later he was also to write in his *De civitate Dei*, that those Christian emperors are 'happy', who subordinate their own power to God's majesty in order to spread the devotion to Him as much as possible.⁵⁹

By reading the relevant letters in chronological order, it is possible to trace the various phases Augustine went through before he would finally approve of imperial coercion. Moreover, this way of reading offers insight into the nuances, motions of withdrawal and hesitations developed by Augustine in his deliberations on this theme.

That Augustine changed his mind is mainly noticeable in his correspondence with the Donatists. In the course of time he assumed various roles in this respect. The mediator (1), in favour of dialogue, became a judge (2), subjecting his interlocutor to a sharp interrogation. Finally he developed into a teacher (3), fighting for the unity of the Church by explaining the need and beneficial influence of this unity, and even into a mystagogue (4), faithful to his principle that coercion to return to the Catholic Church is only meaningful, if it is followed by formation. Although these roles sometimes intertwine and cannot be strictly separated in accordance with certain periods of time, it is striking that in a particular period a particular role is dominant. By mapping out the changing roles, it is possible to develop a balanced view of Augustine's legitimation of violence.

3.1 *The Mediator and the Thirteen Golden Rules for a Good Dialogue (till 399)*

Shortly after his ordination to the priesthood (391) Augustine developed the conviction that the Donatist church was too regionally oriented to be able to guarantee the unity of the universal Church, which since then remained the main point of his objections to the Donatists. In accordance with the Lord's command, the Church had to reach to the ends of the earth and encompass the whole world.⁶⁰ Therefore the Donatists had to return to the Catholic Church.⁶¹

58 Brown, 'Saint Augustine's attitude to religious coercion', 110: they had the 'unquestioned right of *cohercizio* (...) in the strict legal sense, to punish, to restrain and repress those impious cults over which God's providence had given them dominion'. See also *Ep.* 185, 26–28; *Contra Epistolam Parmeniani* 1, 9, 15 and 2, 8, 15; *Ep.* 105, 4, 13; 133, 2–3; 134, 3–4.

59 *De civitate Dei* 5, 24.

60 *Chorus Christi jam totus mundus est. Chorus Christi ab oriente in occidentem consonat, Enarrationes in Psalmos* 149, 7.

61 Cf. for instance: *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 94, 8; *Ep.* 33, 5; 44, 3, 5, 87, 1–2; 4 and especially *Ep.* 93, 7, 22–11, 46.

Even before 395 Augustine entered into discussion with the Donatists on tricky points like rebaptism⁶² and the origin of the schism.⁶³ It is remarkable, however, that until this year he first and foremost sought dialogue with the Donatists. He was first refused by the Donatist elite in Hippo. This did not prevent him from proposing the rules that the participants in the dialogue should observe. This set of rules is not a delimited unity, but they may be distilled from the work that he produced during this period. In his letter (*Ep.* 23) to Maximinus, the Donatist bishop of Sinitum, written between 391 and 395, he proposed for instance that the dialogue should not be burdened by raking up memories of the violence committed by the two parties in the distant past (rule 1). In addition he proposed two rules showing that he was in favour of maximum transparency in the dialogue. The dialogue was to be conducted in all openness (rule 2); everyone had to be informed of the letters written by the various bishops (rule 3). Then the dialogue would give him 'inexpressible joy'.⁶⁴ The dialogue should, according to him, also take place on the basis of equality (rule 4). Seeking a fruitful predisposition for the two partners in dialogue, he suggested to remember that in both churches bad people hide among the good, like chaff in the wheat.⁶⁵ This remark rather serves as an invitation to an open dialogue: neither party should consider itself better than the other on moral grounds. Finally he thought it out of the question that the dialogue should be set in motion by means of coercion (rule 5). He rejected state interference: 'I will not undertake action if the army is present, so that none of you might think that I prefer violence rather than a peaceful method'.⁶⁶

The question does arise why Augustine was in favour of dialogue. It may be concluded from *Contra epistulam Parmeniani* (1, 12, 19) that at the time he already knew the Theodosian legislation against heretical clergy from 392 and was annoyed that this legislation did not prevent armed gangs under the authority of the powerful Donatist bishop Optatus from harassing *atrociter et hostiliter* numerous Catholic churches.⁶⁷ Was he in favour of dialogue because

62 Cf. *Ep.* 23, 2–5; 43, 8, 21 (396–397); cf. *Ep.* 76, 4 (403).

63 *Ep.* 43 (396–397); 76, 4.

64 *Ep.* 23, 6.

65 Cf. *Ep.* 23, 6: *Tollamus de medio inania obiecta, quae a partibus inperitis iactari contra inuicem solent, nec tu obicias tempora Macariana nec ego saeuitiam Circumcellionum. si hoc ad te non pertinet, nec illud ad me. area dominica nondum uentilata est; sine paleis esse non potest. nos oremus atque agamus, quantum possumus, ut frumentum simus.* Cf. also *Ep.* 35, 1.

66 *Ep.* 23, 7. Cf. *Retractationes* 2, 5, 31.

67 *Contra litteras Petilianus* 2, 83, 184.

Theodosius' legislation was of no use and Serenus, vicar at the time, did nothing to help the Catholics?

It is possible though unlikely, considering not only *Ep.* 23 but also *Ep.* 33, written to the Donatist bishop Proculeianus in 396, that Augustine did not want to appeal to legislation during this period but, not yet irritated, as he was to be later, strove for a dialogue on the basis of equality. Around 396 there is still no trace of the later irritation with respect to the Donatists in his texts. He wrote that both Proculeianus and he himself would do one another a favour if they were to deal sincerely with one another in order to be set free from the evil of discord. The fact that he chose the 'we-form' in bringing up the errors⁶⁸ and his apologies for the offensive way in which Evodius explained the unity of the Church to Proculeianus⁶⁹ indicate that he wanted to remove the barrier to dialogue by putting himself and his Church on a higher plan on the basis of moral grounds. As another argument for having minutes taken, he now added that the awareness of this will make the conference proceed more orderly and more peacefully.⁷⁰ Augustine added two new rules to the condition that the dialogue should not be burdened with memories of the past.⁷¹ He called charity the fundamental attitude (rule 6). In addition he let his Donatist interlocutor choose the first subject for discussion, 'persisting with us in prayers and discussing everything peacefully' (rule 7).⁷²

That in 396/397 Augustine did not yet feel the later irritation, expressed in *Contra epistulam Parmeniani*, is also obvious from a letter to the Donatist bishop Eusebius (*Ep.* 34), written in 396/397. Here Augustine brought up the case of the Donatists having accepted a young man who had been rebuked by his Catholic bishop for having beaten up his mother and having threatened to kill her.⁷³ It is remarkable that he suggested to Eusebius not to force Proculeianus into conversation.⁷⁴ In order to promote the dialogue, he proposed the following rules. It was conceivable that Proculeianus was afraid of Augustine's erudition and rhetorical talent. In order not to have the dialogue hindered by this, Augustine suggested to Proculeianus that he may set the rules for the dialogue (rule 8), that he may have himself accompanied by whatever

68 *Ep.* 33, 1.

69 *Ep.* 33, 2.

70 *Ep.* 33, 4.

71 *Ep.* 33, 5.

72 *Ep.* 33, 6.

73 *Ep.* 34, 2.

74 *Ep.* 34, 1.

colleague he chose (rule 9), and that he, Augustine, is prepared to have himself replaced by the unlettered Catholic bishop Samsucius (rule 10).⁷⁵ It was probably in the same year that Augustine wrote that a father is not to use his paternal rights to force his Donatist daughter to return to the Catholic Church. It should be her own desire.⁷⁶

In a letter to Donatist lay people (*Ep.* 44) written during this first period, Augustine formulated a final set of rules for the dialogue. In that year a dispute took place with Fortunius, the Donatist bishop of Thuburiscum Numidarum. Another public debate—also favourably judged by the Donatists—between ten Donatist and ten Catholic bishops on the origin of the schism was disrupted by a mob.⁷⁷ This was, however, no reason for Augustine to think of state intervention. In *Ep.* 44 he proposes to have the dialogue take place in a quiet and neutral village (rule 11), where neither party had a church, to bring along the canonical books and documents that could be produced by both sides (rule 12) and to take the necessary time (rule 13).⁷⁸ Although he sharply and objectively challenged the Donatist view on the origin of the schism, rebaptism and the persecution of Catholics, still his treatment of the Donatists is correct and inviting at the same time.⁷⁹ So till 397 Augustine was unambiguously striving for a dialogue without state intervention. In a few cases he even suggested that, for the sake of the dialogue, he himself would not participate. It should be remarked that in *Ep.* 49 to Honoratus some disappointment is to be noted concerning the lack of concrete results with respect to the unity of the Church: Augustine wondered ironically whether the heritage of Christ is done justice to if the Church is restricted to a small group in Africa.⁸⁰ Still *Ep.* 52, in which he urged his cousin Severinus to leave the Donatist party, also shows that till 399 he was unmistakably in favour of a dialogue with the Donatists without this state interference. The tone of his letters and the thirteen rules for dialogue witness to this.

75 *Ep.* 34, 5; Procleianus refused to enter into correspondence with him, *Ep.* 34, 6; cf. *Ep.* 35, 1; 34, 6 (Samsucius).

76 *Ep.* 35, 4: ... *ad communionem catholicam paterna vellet severitate revocare, et ego feminam corruptae mentis nisi volentem, et libero arbitrio meliora diligenter suscipi noluissem* ...

77 *Ep.* 44, 1–2; cf. O. Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin* (Paris 1969), 436–437.

78 *Ep.* 44, 14.

79 *Ep.* 44, 3, 5–6; 44, 4, 7–8 (schism); 44, 4, 8 (rebaptism); 44, 5, 11 (persecution by Catholics).

80 *Ep.* 49. For the sake of completeness *Ep.* 56 should also be mentioned here. It is a letter to the future proconsul and Donatist Celer, whom Augustine promised a conversation. This promise is redeemed by the priest Optatus.

3.2 *The Judge and Sharp Interrogation (399–405)*

As from 399, however, Augustine's tone and possible strategy in his letters to the Donatists underwent a change. Both may be reduced to his function as judge. When, in 380, emperor Theodosius I had declared Christianity to be the state religion, the secular and the ecclesiastical authorities were no longer altogether separate from one another. The Church became a power factor in the state as a whole. Bishops, usually hailing from the higher classes and well-educated, were recognised by the state as judges.⁸¹ The juridical procedure to which officials of the civil or ecclesiastical courts—the judge or the bishop—were held in Roman law provided for the judge to interrogate someone sharply rather than indict him. Personally administering judgement as bishop, Augustine subjected Crispin, the Donatist bishop of Calama, to such a sharp interrogation in a letter from 399 (*Ep.* 51). Without bothering about rules for a dialogue or even about a polite salutation, which set the tone of his letters to Maximinus and Proculeianus,⁸² he stated that Crispin and he are only near to one another from a geographical point of view and that 'the sin of schism', like the sacrilege of idolatry in the Old Testament (Ex 32:1–6), may certainly be punished.⁸³ The long and sharp interrogation subsequently serves to convince Crispin of his duplicity. Crispin's reproach, that Catholics seek the emperor's assistance to be able to persecute the Donatists, is considered unwarranted by Augustine, as the Donatists themselves appealed to the emperor and his judges in their struggle against the separation of the Maximinianists in their own ranks.⁸⁴ This is not the reason, however, why in this letter, so already in 399, Augustine first declared that he will accept state interference.⁸⁵ The reason is rather more ecclesiological. In a following interrogation Augustine denounces the fact that Crispin divides the body of Christ by means of the schism.⁸⁶

81 A. Cameron, *The Mediterranean World in Late Antiquity, AD 396–600* (London 1993), 57–63. Cf. also C. Rapp, 'The Elite Status of Bishops in Late Antiquity in Ecclesiastical, Spiritual, and Social Contexts', *Arethusa* 33 (2000), 379–399 (382); id., *Holy Bishops in Late Antiquity: The Nature of Christian Leadership in an Age of Transition* (Berkeley, London 2005), *passim*.

82 Cf. *Ep.* 23, 1; 33, 1.

83 *Ep.* 51, 1.

84 *Ep.* 51, 3; cf. 51, 2; 51, 5. The Donatists also imputed to the Catholics that they wanted to achieve unity by means of war and were therefore deniers of the beatitudes, in which the peacemakers are called blessed (*Contra litteras Petiliani* 2, 68, 153; cf. Matt 5:9 and *Contra litteras Petiliani* 2, 92, 202).

85 *Ep.* 51, 3.

86 *Ep.* 51, 4–5.

That his remark on state intervention was not a slip of the pen becomes clear in a following letter to Crispin (*Ep.* 66). There he makes him aware, implicitly but nonetheless very clearly, of a possible threat of state interference by inviting Crispin to discuss the rebaptism of the eighty peasants. This invitation is embedded in both a short interrogation and a threat, in which Crispin is notified of God's wrath—to be avoided both in this world and in the world to come—because he brings about the loss of the unity of the Church. The end of the letter is the end of an interrogation: 'I call upon you in the name of Christ to reply to these points'.⁸⁷ As we have seen, Augustine regarded civil authorities, whether Christian or not, as instruments of God. It is therefore likely that he did not 'only' speak an apocalyptic word, without actually reminding Crispin of imperial coercion. It is not really surprising that Augustine, first as judge, later as mediator, legitimised imperial coercion with respect to the Donatists already around 399/400, and not only in 400–403. He had thought about it before and, understandably in the light of his days, sympathised with the threat of 'violent' interference. As early as 395 he stated that St. Paul on the way to Damascus first experienced divine violence and subsequently came to insight and faith in Christ.⁸⁸ As from 395 he also endorsed imperial legislation against Manichaeism including, as we have seen, the legitimisation of coercion where they were concerned.⁸⁹ It must have been for strategic reasons that it was not until 399 that he wanted the same fate inflicted on Donatists. Where the Donatists were concerned he kept believing in dialogue as long as possible, whereas he could not or did not want to engage in dialogue with the Manicheans.

It is remarkable, however, that with respect to bishop Crispin Augustine strongly emphasises the legitimacy of state interference on the one hand, but on the other hand does not give the state a free hand to punish. It may be deduced from *Ad catholicos fratres*, written around 401–402, that at that time Augustine, even after he had subtly threatened Crispin with state interference, he still pleaded for mildness in its execution. It is true that in this work he plainly accuses the Donatists of having caused a schism (*crimen schismatis*), as a result of which the unity of the universal Church has been lost, but he refuses to call them heretics (*haeretici*).⁹⁰ At the end of his life, Augustine admits that the meaning of this term is not quite clear and he announces

87 *Ep.* 66, 2.

88 *Ad Simplicianum* 1, 2, 22.

89 *Contra Faustum* 5, 8; *Contra litteras Petiliani* 3, 25, 30; *Contra Felicem* 1, 12; 1, 14; 2, 1.

90 *Ad catholicos fratres* 2, 3; 2, 4 and *passim*.

that he will provide a more specific definition.⁹¹ His death prevented him from doing so.⁹²

That Augustine refused to designate the Donatists as heretics is significant, as the Donatists were aware of the fact that the anti-heresy laws, in force since the days of Constantine, might be activated against them and that they would then be regarded as enemies of the state. By explicitly calling them schismatics rather than heretics, Augustine again set himself up as an advocate of dialogue, not characterised by force or coercion, to which heretics might be exposed.⁹³

However, in a letter (*Ep.* 76) from 403, addressed to the Donatists, the greeting is again missing and they are subjected to a barrage of questions.⁹⁴ At the beginning he even calls the false statements the cause of the *heretical* separation. At the end of the letter he tones down this description, however, in order to keep an opening: 'remove yourselves from the crime of *schism*'.⁹⁵

From the fact that he steers a middle course between the terms 'schism' and 'heresy' it may be deduced that Augustine wanted to be milder than Possidius. Augustine did not let Possidius down when the latter, after having been assaulted by the priest Crispin, managed to convince the proconsul to have bishop Crispin convicted under the laws against heretics.⁹⁶ In *Ep.* 76, however, Augustine shows himself in line with emperor Honorius, who declared that bishops should not demand revenge but should rather be merciful.⁹⁷ The question is who influenced whom. Is Augustine speaking through Honorius or is Honorius speaking through Augustine? *Ep.* 76, from 403, leaves the question open. However this be, here Augustine seems to be a judge rather than a mediator. This may possibly be the result of the continuing violence on the part of the *circumcelliones* against the Catholic clergy and officials.⁹⁸

In spite of the tone and his awareness that many imperial laws were applicable to the Donatists,⁹⁹ his policy in 400–403 still seems peaceful. His strategy included having reliable friends appointed bishop in surrounding dioceses. In

91 *De haeresibus* praef. 7.

92 For an early differentiation between the terms 'heretical' and 'schismatic', see: *De fide et symbolo* 21.

93 *Ad catholicos fratres* 7.

94 *Ep.* 76, 3–4.

95 *Ep.* 76, 1 (heretical); 76, 3.

96 Cf. *Contra Cresconium* 3, 45, 49 and footnote 41.

97 Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 186–187.

98 Cf. *Ad catholicos fratres* 19, 50; 20, 54; *Contra Cresconium* 3, 42, 46.

99 Cf. *Contra Epistulam Parmeniani* 1, 12, 29 and *passim*. For the discussion concerning the dating cf. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 101.

this way Possidius became bishop of Calama, Alypius of Thagaste and Severus of Mileve,¹⁰⁰ and although Augustine had threatened bishop Crispin with state interference, the organisation of the annual conference in Carthage shows his peaceful strategy. These conferences were, by the way, also of importance for the Catholic Church, as then not only policy decisions were made but the Catholic clergy also closed their ranks. Moreover the way of life of the Catholic clergy was discussed, as the Donatists should not have any reason for criticism.¹⁰¹ If, however, in this next phase the anti-heresy legislation was to be applied to Donatists, the circle around Augustine as well as Augustine himself did emphasise the need to practise great moderation. There are quite a number of letters in which Augustine asks consuls or tribunes not to fully impose the punishment deserved.¹⁰² At Possidius' request the fine to be paid by Crispin was not imposed.¹⁰³ Probably Augustine wanted to avoid violence in the form of reprisals by the *circumcelliones*. He also wanted to deprive the Donatists of the possibility to identify themselves with Jewish and especially Christian martyrs. It is at least as likely, however, that by 402–403 he was already fully aware of the fact that, although the circumstances had changed, it would help the dialogue if a conviction was pronounced without the punishment being carried out.¹⁰⁴

In 403 Augustine did not offer resistance when proconsul Septimus forced the Donatists to participate in the conference held in Carthage in that year. The background of his attitude is probably the continuing violence of the *circumcelliones* against the Catholic clergy and the initial refusal of the Donatists to take part. In 409 Augustine will still reproach the Donatists for their refusal, because this had led to a spiral of violence.¹⁰⁵ Possibly the assault on Possidius, already mentioned, also played an important part in Augustine's attitude.

However this be, by 403–404 his policy had changed. Whereas in 401–402, in *Ad catholicos fratres*, he had still pleaded for regarding the Donatists as *schismatics*, who should be safeguarded against prosecution as heretics, now he

100 Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 87.

101 Ch. Munier, H.-J. Sieben, 'Concilium (Concilia)', in *Augustinus-Lexikon* I (Basel 1994), 1085–1107.

102 Cf. the letters to proconsul Donatus (*Ep.* 100), Macedonius (*Ep.* 152 and 153), Apringius (proconsul, *Ep.* 134), and Marcellinus (*Ep.* 133 and 139).

103 *Ep.* 105, 2, 4; Possidius, *Vita* 12.

104 Cf. for instance also *Ep.* 88, 7, in which Augustine pleads for sparing Proculeianus and Crispin after their conviction by imposing only a fine on them. It irritates him that Crispin lodges an appeal all the same.

105 Cf. *Ep.* 105, 4, 13.

no longer resisted conviction on account of heresy. By this time he had probably come to the insight that a light form of coercion was necessary to get going the dialogue for the sake of unity.

Around 403 Augustine first makes explicit for Petilianus, the Donatist bishop of Constantine (Cirta), what his ideas are about the relationship between coercion and love. He states that *persecutio* may be legitimate in certain cases,¹⁰⁶ as may the confiscation of Donatist property in accordance with the regulations against heretics.¹⁰⁷ This was unacceptable to Petilianus, and even irreligious because, according to him, the free will, given by God, was not to be influenced by coercive measures.¹⁰⁸ All the same here Augustine legitimises coercion by describing it as not being a goal in itself. He actually says that he does not expect a solution in the conflict with the Donatists to be brought about by violence but rather by love.

Augustine's letter to Petilianus cannot be dated with certainty. He probably wrote it between 401–405. However, the change in Augustine's way of thinking certainly becomes quite perceptible in 405, after the promulgation of the Edict of Unity, which Augustine must have experienced as a real encouragement. The imperial aversion to the Donatists had undoubtedly been increased by a delegation of Catholic clergy that came to the imperial court in 404 in order to ask the emperor for safety and support. On the spot they showed their wounds, which certainly strengthened their case.¹⁰⁹

Still the Donatist violence continued. This is to be deduced from a letter to the Donatist bishop Vincent of Cartenna from 405. In this letter Augustine enumerates a number of Donatist violent crimes, also committed against Donatists who wanted to embrace the *Catholica*.

106 *Contra litteras Petiliani* 1, 23, 25 (*persecutio*); 1, 29, 31 (love). On the basis of an analysis of letters in which Augustine speaks about the possible application of coercion, the letters to Petilianus might be dated more precisely to after 403, rather than to 400–405. Cf. *Ep.* 77 (written between 405–411); *Enarrationes in Psalmos* 101; *Sermo* 164, 8–9 (written around 406). Cf. *Retractationes* 2, 47, 74. Also cf. *Contra litteras Petiliani* 2, 93, 214.

107 Cf. *Contra litteras Petiliani* 2, 59, 134 (cf. *Contra Epistulam Parmeniani* 1, 11, 18–13, 20; *Contra Gaudentium* 1, 37, 50–38, 51). Augustine himself also suggested a number of punitive measures: the denial of certain civil rights, prohibition of worship and of rebaptism Cf. P. van Geest, 'Ordines', in *Augustinus-Lexikon* (in press). He also pleaded for having last wills of Donatists declared invalid (*Sermo* 47, 22) and in a letter to Nectarius, in 409–410, he showed himself to be in favour of fines, on condition that the offenders were allowed to keep enough to be able to live (*Ep.* 104, 1, 4).

108 *Contra litteras Petiliani* 2, 36, 84. Cf. *ibid.*, 2, 93, 214.

109 *Contra Cresconium* 3, 43, 47; *Ep.* 185, 7, 26; 88, 7: *imperatorem commouerant*.

On the basis of facts presented to me by my colleagues, I gave in, although I was originally of the opinion that nobody may be forced to join the union of Christ (i.e. the universal Catholic Church) ... I had to give up this opinion, however, not on the basis of arguments to the contrary but on the basis of proven facts.¹¹⁰

Augustine wrote these words in 407–408, but he was looking back to the preceding period. As from 405 it is really evident that Augustine considers active state interference to be useful and necessary. From 405 until 419, the year in which he produced his last works in connection with the Donatists, Augustine will not hesitate to enlarge upon the violent crimes against Catholics. Not only in his work against Cresconius (405) but also in other writings he elaborately describes for instance the tortures of the Catholic bishops Servus of Thuburiscum and Maximinianus of Bagai and he will continue to do so till 417. All the same, after 405, he generally assumes a different role from that of interrogating judge, as we will see later on.

During the phase in which Augustine mainly interrogates sharply as a judge, he does not always keep to his own thirteen rules for a good dialogue, as he regularly comes back to the violence perpetrated by the *circumcelliones*. He concludes that Catholics were obliged to look for support and that the Donatists have no reason to complain about violence. During this period he impresses on Cresconius that, although the Donatists do not deviate from the orthodox doctrines of the Church and also know the sacraments,¹¹¹ they may still be called heretics, because they persist in their schism. Augustine has added a new element to his definition of heretics: 'Firmly persisting in schism

110 *His ergo exemplis a collegis meis mihi propositis cessi. Nam mea primitus sententia non erat nisi neminem ad unitatem Christi esse cogendum, uerbo esse agendum, disputatione pugnandum, ratione uincendum, ne fictos catholicos haberemus, quos apertos haereticos noueramus. Sed haec opinio mea non contradicentium uerbis sed demonstrantium superabatur exemplis, Ep. 93, 5, 17. See also Timo J. Weissenberg, *Die Friedenslehre des Augustinus. Theologische Grundlagen und ethische Entfaltung* (Stuttgart 2005), 467–474, 477–509, for the theological implications and the ecclesiological and theological background of these questions.*

111 *Contra Cresconium* 2, 3, 4: *Quamquam id quod inter nos accidit, schisma potius quam haeresim censes appellari oportere, ... Nam haereses nonnisi inter diuersa sequentes fieri solent, nec haereticus nisi contrariae uel aliter interpretatae religionis est cultor ... Inter nos, quibus idem Christus natus, mortuus et resurgens, una religio, eadem Sacramenta, nihil in christiana obseruatione diuersum, schisma factum, non haeresis dicitur. Cf. Hermanowicz, *Possidius of Calama*, 129–131.*

is heresy.¹¹² Thus after 405 Augustine follows the harder line of Possidius and leaves the way of emperor Honorius. He then appears to advocate exactly the same treatment for the Donatists as he favours for the Manicheans: they are heretics to whom sterner punitive measures apply.

3.3 *The Teacher (405–408)*

The period of hardening does not last long, however. The content of *Ep.* 87 (written between 405 and 411) is still harsh: the Donatist bishop Emeritus of Caesarea in Mauretania gets a sharp indictment, in which Augustine reproaches the Donatists with isolationism and in which he legitimises the imperial power to repress the Donatists. The tone is already different, however, as at the end of the letter Augustine adds that he regrets it that the debate is not always characterised by the *moderatio* that should really be typical of Christians. In this way he takes up exactly the same position as he did in the phase when he drew up the rules for the dialogue.¹¹³

In this letter another significant change may be noticed. Once Augustine may trust in the implementation of Honorius' *decreta* he sees the possibility of developing from a judge into an inviting teacher, who does not interrogate but rather explains why the unity of the Church may not be broken. Although he holds on to the idea that the Donatist schism has become heresy because the Donatists have persevered, he usually refers to them, more gently, as schismatics.¹¹⁴ He must have done this consciously. In *Ep.* 87 it is clearly his purpose to convince the Donatists that there is no reason to break the unity of the Church. Characterising them as heretics would not have promoted their readiness to read his exposition on this point. Exactly because the interrogation is embedded in this exposition—and not the other way around—in this letter he seems to be the teacher who wants to instruct rather than the judge who orders.

This unity is the central notion revealed by—among others—the passage in which Augustine shows that he understands why the Donatists did not excommunicate Optatus: he would have dragged many with him.¹¹⁵ This would

112 *Contra Cresconium* 2, 7, 9: *Haeresis autem, schisma inueteratum*; 2, 8, 10: *Nam et haeretici estis, uel quod in schismate inueterato remansistis*. In 428, in *De haeresibus* 69, 1–2, he 'thinks up' still another argument. Donatists are heretics, because they were led by a heretic, Donatus who, like the Arians, considered the Son to be inferior to the Father and the Spirit inferior to the Son. He hastens to add that the average Donatists was not aware of Donatus' error.

113 *Ep.* 87, 6 (isolationism); 87, 7; 87, 8.

114 *Ep.* 87, 1–2; 87, 4; 87, 6; 87, 7; 87, 8.

115 *Ep.* 87, 4.

have meant another rent in the Body of Christ, which was already torn. At the beginning and at the end of the letter Augustine emphasises, as he did around 399, that the presence of chaff and wheat together in the Church does not harm her and only God will separate the two at the end of time.¹¹⁶ Now, however, he denies even more explicitly the conviction that the alleged impurity of certain Church members justifies separation and he reduces this conviction to pride and conceitedness. The passage in which he states that the Donatists should be reunited to the Church in order to be corrected is as extensive as it is inviting. Augustine indeed emphasises reunion but he uses a very gentle metaphor: without rebaptism the Donatists are regarded as a shoot that will again be grafted into the old tree. As was the case in 399, Augustine also hastens to say that he is displeased that some Catholics apply violence—legitimate in itself, as the Donatists had disrupted the unity—without Christian moderation.¹¹⁷ As at the end of the letter Augustine, moreover, calls Emeritus his lovable and beloved brother and invites him for a dialogue on the origin of the schism, it seems as if he wants to return to the period when he was mediator rather than judge.¹¹⁸ However, at this stage he presents himself as a teacher because now that he can trust that, if necessary, the guidelines in Honorius' *decreta* will be applied, he no longer wants to legitimise coercion but wants to embark upon instruction. Therefore he travels to a Donatist community in Cirta, between 405 and 411, not to dispute or to threaten with violence, but to instruct the members: members of the group had indicated that they wanted to become Catholics.¹¹⁹

At the same time a number of Catholic clerics kept pursuing a more rigid line. Between 406 and 411 they wrote a letter to the Donatist bishop Januarius of Casae Nigrae in Numidia, containing an extensive description of the violent crimes committed against Catholic clergy, including those against Possidius. The many details form the onset of a well-documented and sharp indictment. Augustine unmistakably had a hand in this letter.¹²⁰ It seems as if, as the

116 Cf. *Ep.* 87, 2–3.

117 Cf. *Ep.* 87, 8–9.

118 *Ep.* 87, 10.

119 Cf. *Ep.* 144.

120 *Ep.* 88. The wounds that the maltreated bishop of Bagai came to show at court are interpreted as an argument for imperial intervention (88, 1–2); the offences of the *circumcelliones* are documented (88, 6; 88, 7), but also those of Catholics who likewise killed and blinded others (88, 8). As is also the case in other works, Augustine most extensively elaborates on the torturing of Severus of Thuburiscum and Maximinianus of Bagai. These keep him occupied till 417.

ghost-writer of his colleagues, he falls back into the role he had assumed before 405 and even assumes his role from before 399. He actually suggests that the Catholic bishops wanted a council rather than violence and that they were always in favour of mildness in executing a sentence. Moreover the Donatists are advised to take over a good Catholic practice: at their councils they also have to concentrate on self-correction and engage in dialogue not only with Catholics but also with perpetrators of violence among themselves.¹²¹ However, when in the years 406–411, Augustine writes personally, it turns out that after 405 he wants to present himself as a teacher rather than as a judge.

In *Epistula* 105 for instance, written to the Donatists around 406, he writes at the beginning that he wants to win every human being to the love of Christ and he ends by saying that this love is operative only in the Body of Christ, the Church, and that the Truth may be found here collectively.¹²² In this inclusion—altogether in agreement with his conviction that formation should necessarily follow coercion—he first lists, in an interrogation, the historical facts regarding violence on both sides. Thereby Augustine negates the Donatist reproach of the Catholics, accusing them of ‘irreligious behaviour’ on account of their appeal to the state: he even states therefore that at the time of Constantine and Julian the Donatists also called for state interference.¹²³ With a certain irony he discusses the Donatist idea that the Catholic Church survived only in Africa in Donatus’ sect: this is an idea for which he finds no evidence either in the Old or the New Testament. Subsequently he legitimises imperial coercion by stating that Donatist violence and terror prevented Catholics from preaching the truth. An additional argument for this coercion is the notion that emperors issue their orders in the service of unity.¹²⁴ Besides, the Old Testament already teaches that princes are an instrument of God.¹²⁵

However, after Augustine has described the Donatist violence as destructive and the Catholic violence as preventive, defensive and leading to formation and restoration of the unity in the Church, in other words after a sharp confrontation,¹²⁶ the discourse turns into an appeal. Here too Augustine turns out to be

121 Cf. *Ep.* 88, 4 (letters by the emperors Flavius Constantinus Maximus and Valerius Licinian Licinius to Probian, proconsul of Africa); 88, 5, 7 (interrogation); 88, 7 (council that was held under coercion in 403, as has been noted); 88, 7 (gentleness; cf. *Ep.* 105, 4); 88, 10 (exhortation council and self-correction); 88, 11 (debate); 88, 12 (reply: no more violence).

122 Cf. *Ep.* 105, 17.

123 *Ep.* 105, 2, 8.

124 *Ep.* 105, 2, 5; also cf. *Ep.* 105, 2, 3–4.

125 *Ep.* 105, 2, 6 (unity); 105, 2, 7 (instrument); cf. *Ep.* 105, 5, 9–10.

126 *Ep.* 105, 2, 6.

of the opinion that legislation against heretics applicable to Donatists is to be applied with great moderation. He reminds the reader that the fine Crispin had to pay was not imposed.¹²⁷ It is, moreover, remarkable that the discourse ends almost in a plea.¹²⁸ With great passion he asks the Donatists to love peace and unity and he mitigates the possible imperial coercive measures by suggesting that it is Christ Himself who commands them.¹²⁹ Finally there is an exposition on the incorrectness of rebaptism. This last message is possibly most indicative of Augustine's striving for formation. He rejects the Donatist practice of rebaptism and carefully underpins his thesis. According to him the validity of baptism does not depend on the worthiness of the minister but on the action of Christ.¹³⁰ This treatise also ends in a plea: 'Be reconciled with us, brothers, we love you; we want for you what we want for ourselves.'¹³¹

At the end of the letter Augustine makes the same remarks as he did in 391, namely that both parties should remember that in both churches bad people hide among the good, like chaff in wheat, that the question regarding the *traditores* had better be allowed to rest.¹³² Again his inclusive use of language is remarkable: 'let *us* not perish ... rejoice with *us* in the truth'.¹³³ Especially the end of the letter shows that Augustine wants to invite to an open dialogue, in which neither party should consider itself better than the other on moral grounds.

3.4 *The Mystagogue and the Theorist of Mystagogy (408–419)*

Eventually in the course of time Augustine assumes a final role, the role of mystagogue, who guides and prepares individuals for the association with a Mystery: God.

As we have seen, Augustine gives an account of his change of opinion with respect to the use of coercion in *Ep.* 93, written in 407 or 408.¹³⁴ In this letter he makes explicit his conviction that coercion should 'only' be the onset of

¹²⁷ Possidius, *Vita*, 12; Augustine, *Ep.* 105, 2, 4.

¹²⁸ *Ep.* 105, 4, 13.

¹²⁹ *Ep.* 105, 3, 11: *Sed iam tollamus ista omnia de medio; amemus pacem, quam omnis doctus et indoctus intellegit praeponendam esse discordiae, diligamus et teneamus unitatem. Hoc iubent imperatores, quod iubet et Christus; quia cum bonum iubent, per illos non iubet nisi Christus.* Cf. *Ep.* 105, 3, 12; 5, 17.

¹³⁰ *Ep.* 105, 3, 12; see also 106, 1.

¹³¹ *Ep.* 105, 4, 13.

¹³² *Ep.* 106, 5, 16–17; Cf. *Ep.* 23, 6.

¹³³ *Ep.* 10, 5, 17.

¹³⁴ *Ep.* 93, 5, 17. See footnote 110.

instruction and formation. If the Donatists were to be just forced and not also instructed, this would, according to him, be 'a nasty kind of abuse of power'.¹³⁵

It is in this letter, however, that Augustine also shows himself to be a mystagogue and precisely in a passage in which he legitimises coercion. Right at the beginning of the letter he compares state interference and coercion to the onset of the healing process.¹³⁶ He emphatically puts his explicit legitimisation of coercion in the perspective of a formation process, as he stresses that God Himself does not only treat man with kindness but also wants to save him:

He often adds to the gentle salves by which he comforts us the most biting medicine of tribulation; he trains even the pious and devout patriarchs with famine ... Though he was asked three times, he does not remove from the apostle the thorn in his flesh, in order that he make virtue perfect in weakness.¹³⁷

So in the formation process of man envisaged by God, coercion is sometimes an essential element. Only after sketching this mystagogical background does Augustine discuss the (Old Testament) scriptural passages with which he substantiates support of force. It is not the other way around.¹³⁸ He writes to Vincent of Cartenna, the Donatist bishop mentioned above (*dilectissimo fratri* all the same), that he does not consider it useless that the Donatists be held in check and corrected by the authorities established by God, and that fear for the laws is a useful instrument.¹³⁹ He again legitimises coercion by saying that he has heard and experienced that the Donatist towns that had become Catholic out of fear were finally happy and grateful on account of the unity regained and dissociated themselves from their former stubbornness.¹⁴⁰ He also states that state coercion is justified because it frightens those Donatists that do not

135 *Ep.* 93, 1, 3: *Tu non adtendis nisi eos, qui ita duri sunt, ut nec istam recipiant disciplinam. De talibus scriptum est: frustra flagellauit filios uestros; disciplinam non receperunt. Puto tamen, quia dilectione, non odio flagellati sunt. Sed debes etiam tam multos adtendere, de quorum salute gaudemus. ... si enim terrerentur et non docerentur, inproba quasi dominatio uideretur.*

136 *Ep.* 93, 1, 1; 93, 1, 3; 93, 2, 4.

137 *Ep.* 93, 2, 4 (2 Cor 12:7–9). Translation taken from: *Letters 1–99*. Translation and notes by Roland Teske, in *The Works of Saint Augustine: A Translation for the 21st Century* 2.1 (New York 2001), 379.

138 *Ep.* 93, 3, 9.

139 *Ep.* 93, 1, 1; cf. *Ep.* 93, 5, 18 (fear for laws) and 93, 6, 20.

140 *Ep.* 93, 5, 16–17. Also cf. *Ep.* 93, 1, 2; 93, 2, 4–5.

hesitate to use violence in their own ranks against Donatists who want to become Catholics. These Donatists now become frightened themselves: the hunter becomes the hunted. From this it follows that Augustine legitimises the threat of state interference by pointing out that the Donatists are removed from their comfort zone and forced to think about their habits and attitude. However, the overall theme of this letter is the intensification of fear as the beginning of freedom in which the truth of the Catholic faith will be recognised all the more purely.¹⁴¹ At the end of the letter, as mystagogue rather than as judge or teacher, he compares (painful) correction with the pain preceding the healing process, healing that takes place by returning to the Catholic Church and subsequently by personal correction and repentance.¹⁴² He also considers harsh words to be in line with coercion: they bring about reflection and repentance. In accordance with the guideline that he himself gives in *Praeceptum* 6, to have words of rebuke followed by words of healing, because otherwise the first will not be effective, Augustine now makes explicit for the first time why he calls the Donatists 'heretics'. Legislation makes it a threatening word, up to a point. So he uses the word to enforce a moment of repentance and reflection but with the final goal of promoting return to the Catholic Church and thus peace and joy.¹⁴³ Therefore it is understandable why Augustine uses affective language especially at the end of the letter: the Church is described as a mother, who welcomes both old and new Catholics with maternal love.

These are the words of someone who envisages a formation process. That Augustine also speaks as a mystagogue does not alter the fact that he still presents himself as a mediator. He again approaches the Donatists benevolently, as he points out that he disapproves of the Catholics' greed in applying the imperial laws, because this is a violation of justice.¹⁴⁴ Neither does he fail to be the teacher. After the legitimisation of state interference, he speaks about the nature of the universal Church on the basis of his studies of Cyprian's and Tyconius' view of the Church.¹⁴⁵ The fact that, as from 405, he also reveals himself as a teacher (and later on as a mystagogue) does not mean that he always speaks in this way. *Ep.* 97, for instance, to Olympius (408), is a terse appeal to

141 *Ep.* 93, 5, 17. In *De dono perseverantiae* 2, 2 Augustine also regards fear as a gift of God, so that man may persevere in his devotion to Him. In a way he also intensifies fear in *De dono perseverantiae* 8, 18–20, when he emphasises that of two children or twins one may be saved by God's grace and not the other, be it under reference to God's incomprehensibility.

142 *Ep.* 93, 12, 50 (church); 93, 12, 52 (personal conversion).

143 *Ep.* 93, 11, 46.

144 *Ep.* 93, 12, 50–51; cf. 93, 3, 10.

145 *Ep.* 93, 6, 21; 93, 7, 22–23; 93, 9, 28–34; 93, 10, 40–45.

protect Catholics against the persistent violence of Donatists and to uphold the rigour of the imperial law against heretics and pagans. *Ep.* 105 (409–410), a general letter to the Donatists, and *Ep.* 133 to tribune Marcellinus contain detailed descriptions of violence suffered by Catholics.¹⁴⁶ In line with his speaking as a mystagogue he tries to characterise the Donatist violence as senseless, by presenting hatred as its motive, or revenge and destruction as its goals, but he assigns quite a different function to violence used by the state: this violence is salutary. In *Ep.* 108, from 409–410, to the Donatist bishop Macrobius, we again see the teacher. Now, however, his reflections on imperial violence¹⁴⁷ and his combatting of rebaptism¹⁴⁸ are not intended to convince the Donatists of their inconsistent way of thinking. He is now concerned about promoting the unity of the Catholics and the Donatists that once existed and that is precisely denied by rebaptism: 'Or do you perhaps deny that we are brothers?'¹⁴⁹ The consistent use of the word schism, the inclusive language use ('we' have to become wheat, vessels of gold or silver),¹⁵⁰ the characterisation of the Church as Noah's ark, in which clean and unclean animals bear with one another, also witness to this striving for unity. Time and again, by using such images, he tries to convince the Donatists that the alleged wickedness of members of the Church may not be a reason for others to secede and found a new religious community.¹⁵¹

146 Cf. *Ep.* 105, 2, 4; 133.

147 Cf. *Ep.* 108, 2; 108, 17 (Civil law turns out to be necessary as a first invitation to the unity that already exists in other sectors of society (family, fellow citizens)); 108, 18–19 (Law is necessary so that *circumcelliones* do not threaten their superiors).

148 *Ep.* 108, 1, 2–3, 7; 108, 5, 15; 108, 6, 19.

149 *Ep.* 108, 1, 2–3. Cf. *Ep.* 108, 3, 7–8 (reference to 1Tim 5:22; Dan 9:5; 2Cor 11:26 to show that good and bad people have always coexisted in the Church and that this is tolerated). Cf. *Ep.* 108, 3, 11 (quoting Cyprian); 54, 3 (to indicate that on earth man is not allowed to separate chaff from wheat). In *Ep.* 108, 3, 12 Augustine shows that a schism cannot be justified by referring to the parables of chaff and wheat (Matt 3:12), sheep and goats (Matt 25:31), good and bad fishes (Matt 13:47–50). For Augustine's indebtedness to Cyprian in guaranteeing unity in the Donatist struggle, see P. van Geest, *Pectus ardet evangelica pietate, et pectori respondet oratio*. Augustine's Neglect of Cyprian's Striving for Sincerity', in: P. van Geest, H. van Loon, H. Bakker (eds), *Cyprian: Studies in his Life, Language and Thought* (Leuven, Dudley 2010), 203–224 and idem, *Waarachtigheid. Augustinus over levenskunst* (Zoetermeer 2011), 116–118.

150 *Ep.* 108, 3, 10–11.

151 Cf. *Ep.* 108, 5, 14–15 (reference to Col 3:13); 108, 7, 20 (Noah's ark, which was used by the Donatists as a metaphor for their church, in which there was clean baptismal water and one was safeguarded against the filthy waters of the world).

As from 411 onwards, Augustine shows himself not only as a mystagogue but also as a theorist of mystagogy. Once again he justifies towards the Donatist priest Donatus the state interference in that year, emphasising that coercion should always be motivated by love, like a father forcing his child to do something may lead to a good result.¹⁵² In accordance with his principle that formation should follow coercion, Augustine instructs this priest—who wanted to commit suicide because his church had been destroyed—about the Acts of the conference of Carthage (411; *Gesta collationis Carthaginensis*). Then he urges him to read the rest for himself, so that he may again rejoice with him, Augustine, in the peace of Christ, the unity of the Catholic Church and fraternal love.¹⁵³

Finally *Ep.* 185, written to the African tribune Boniface in 417, has always been central in the research concerning Augustine's legitimization of coercion and violence. The letter is still quoted quite often, but should not really be used as a mine of information for pronouncements on Augustine's theory in its most developed form, as the letter has much more to offer.

In this letter Augustine also makes explicit his ideas about the path of formation that some Christians should follow, thus manifesting himself as a mystagogue. He points out that laws, coercion and violence may only be legitimised in as far as they are intended to promote unity and fraternal love.¹⁵⁴ The laws serve to intensify fear but as such 'only' form an onset to reflection and growth in faith.¹⁵⁵ Thus violence against the Donatists has to form the onset to their reform and their return to the Church.¹⁵⁶

In this context the emperor is described as a physician who has to keep a mental patient in check. He is also compared to a father, who would be cruel rather than good and kind if he did not punish his undisciplined son.¹⁵⁷ He might be reproached with negligence if he had not acted by promulgating laws for the sake of the integrity of the body, that is to say: the unity of the Church.¹⁵⁸ Here Augustine presupposes that at the beginning words may not always be sufficient—if people will not listen, other measures are needed.¹⁵⁹

152 *Ep.* 173, 2, 3 (father; Prov 23:14).

153 *Ep.* 173, 8–9.

154 *Ep.* 185, 7, 25. Unlike in 402, he does call the Donatists 'heretics' now.

155 *Ep.* 185, 2, 8.

156 *Ep.* 185, 3, 13.

157 *Ep.* 185, 2, 7; emperor, doctor and father are here compared to someone who wants to cure a mule (i.e. the Donatists—*sic*) but runs the risk of being kicked in the process.

158 *Ep.* 185, 8, 28.

159 *Ep.* 185, 7, 26.

So we may conclude that Augustine's legitimation of violence mainly emanates from his ideal of formation and his image of the Church. In the first part of *Ep.* 185, however, he also interweaves an argument by which he justifies imperial violence in a different, more direct way, as in *Ep.* 138, 2, 14: imperial violence may also form a counterforce against the repressive violence of the Donatists with respect to people in their own circle wanting to return to the *Catholica*—a movement that got going in the days of Caecilianus.¹⁶⁰ He justifies the laws as a means against the Catholics' fear for extremism as well as the Donatists' fanaticism¹⁶¹ and their maltreatment of laypeople and Catholic clergy, including even bishops.¹⁶² The latter knew that they would be maltreated if they continued to preach the truth.¹⁶³ On this point Augustine is as confronting as he is realistic. The weaker bishops might easily give in. Therefore God's help, mediated by the Christian emperors, is needed to prevent errors from occurring.¹⁶⁴

As *Ep.* 185 proceeds, however, Augustine motivates coercion and violence explicitly by putting them both in the framework of an individual formation process and, in interaction with this, a collective formation. So here he is a mystagogue rather than a teacher. First he notes that instruction is successful as a result of kindness rather than of coercion or fear. First the perfect love of God should banish the fear of hell. Basing himself on Terentius, however, he adds a little cynically that the majority of people happen to be corrected by fear rather than by kindness.¹⁶⁵ In order to tone down these harsh words a little, he refers to St. Paul's blindness (Acts 9:6–9), thus showing that even apostles may be guided towards healing, insight and love by means of an unpleasant experience.¹⁶⁶

160 *Ep.* 185, 3, 13; 185, 4, 14 (suicide actions); 185, 4, 15 (threat of beatings, burning down houses, torturing respectable heads of families by tying them to mills and turning them around); 185, 4, 16 ('return movement'). Cf. *Ep.* 185, 7, 29; 185, 8, 32.

161 *Ep.* 185, 7, 29.

162 *Ep.* 185, 7, 30: *Ex his sunt in quibus adhuc laboratur, in quo labore multa Catholici, et maxime episcopi et clerici horrenda et dura perpessi sunt, quae commemorare longum est; quando quorundam et oculi exstincti sunt, et cuiusdam episcopi manus et lingua praecisa est; nonnulli etiam trucidati sunt. Taceo crudelissimas caedes, et domorum depraedationes, per nocturnas aggressiones et incendia, non solum priuatorum habitaculorum, uerum etiam ecclesiarum; in quas flammis non defuerunt qui et Codices dominicos mitterent.*

163 *Ep.* 185, 7, 30 (persecution of laypeople and clergy).

164 *Ep.* 185, 5, 18. Cf. *Ep.* 185, 7, 25.

165 *Ep.* 185, 6, 21; cf. Terentius, *Adelphi* 57–58; 1 John 4:18.

166 *Ep.* 185, 6, 22. See also *Ad Simplicianum* 1, 2, 22.

Nolens volens Augustine here describes his conception of his task as a mystagogue, precisely by emphasising that laws, first experienced as coercive, will finally be recognised in the Church as the onset of salvation and happiness.¹⁶⁷

In this context the Church is described as a tree spreading its branches over the whole world: 'In her love for them she suffers labour pains: she wants them to return to the root, for away from that they cannot have true life.'¹⁶⁸ These are certainly no threatening or admonishing words, on the contrary, Augustine's use of language is rather affectionate here. He also uses such language when he visualises the Donatist clergy as a shoot again grafted onto an old tree by means of the smallest incision. In opposition to Cyprian's view, he also suggests here to let them keep their positions which they held in their own church as clergy or bishops, after remorse over their error.¹⁶⁹

It is clear that Augustine envisages only one goal: the unity of the Church, described by him, in the words of the psalmist, as the bond of fraternal love, as he also does in texts about the order of life in his monastic community.

In this context, at the end of *Ep.* 185 a striking parallel with Augustine's *Praeceptum* (*reg.* 3) forcefully presents itself. Here the church father explains the confiscation and forced restitution of Donatist churches to the Catholics in the perspective of bringing about unity. An avaricious person does not want partners; the Catholic Church cannot be accused of this because she desires the return of the lost sheep. In the first chapter of the *Praeceptum* Augustine mentions community of goods as a condition for the unity of heart and soul. Therefore the confiscation ultimately serves the unity of Donatists and Catholics, like that of brothers, that is after all supported by the community of goods.¹⁷⁰

Thus laws, coercion and punishment, exactly like the directions in the *Praeceptum*, prove to be at the service of unity in the community (ecclesiological) and, in interaction, of the individual's repentance and inner purity (mystagogical). The principles Augustine had in his domestic community resonate in his

167 *Ep.* 185, 6, 23. In *In Iohannis evangelium tractatus* 26, 4 he also states that the pleasure derived from doing something may have the same effect as coercion but that the former is to be preferred: *Porro si poetae* (Vergilius, *Ecloga* 2) *dicere licuit*: *Trahit sua quemque voluptas; non necessitas, sed voluptas; non obligatio, sed delectatio: quanto fortius nos dicere debemus trahi hominem ad Christum, qui delectatur veritate, delectatur beatitudine, delectatur iustitia, delectatur sempiterna vita, quod totum Christus est?* Cf. *Sermo* 131, 2 (417).

168 *Ep.* 185, 9, 32.

169 *Ep.* 185, 11, 46; cf. van Geest, 'Ordines', in *Augustinus-Lexikon* (in press).

170 *Ep.* 185, 9, 35; 185, 9, 36 (quotation Ps 133:1, *Ecce quam iocundum habitare fratres in unum*); cf. *reg.* 3, 1.

letters. So he also applies them to the Donatists, who may not be removed from the Church, the body of Christ, because it is only here that the Holy Spirit inspires and forgives. In this context Augustine emphatically urges Boniface that coercive measures may only be taken for the purpose of bringing about the unity and the integrity of the Church.¹⁷¹

It is possible that in 418 Augustine also remembered Terentius' advice. In that year he undertook a journey to Caesarea in Mauretania, 685 miles away from Hippo, to have a discussion with the Donatist bishop Emeritus. The discussion yielded no results,¹⁷² perhaps because he did not have the army behind him. Unfortunately we cannot attain any certainty about this.

4 Conclusion

Augustine's legitimization of imperial coercion did not come out of the blue. First of all it is important to remember that in Augustine's days people thought differently about principles like religious freedom, freedom of conscience and religious pluralism than we do nowadays. Moreover he lived at a time that was far more violent than ours. Against this background it is actually quite remarkable that he speaks about the application of coercion and violence in such a balanced way. In fact Augustine had far more balanced ideas about the application of coercion and violence than anyone else in those days.

It turns out that in the course of the years Augustine assumed ever changing roles. As we have seen, these roles intertwine and they cannot be strictly separated in accordance with certain periods of time. On the other hand, however, it should be noted that in certain periods a certain role is dominant.

During the first period (till 399) Augustine was still completely averse to all forms of violence or coercion. At this time he first and foremost assumes the role of mediator, developing rules for a fruitful dialogue. At that time he is more focussed on rules regarding the meticulousness and transparency of the dialogue than he is during the subsequent period.

At an earlier stage than has been assumed in the literature, namely in 399 rather than in 403, he does hint that he no longer disapproves of the use of violence to force the Donatists into dialogue. He must have realised that his initial approach to restore the unity of the Body of Christ, the Church, was

¹⁷¹ *Ep.* 185,11,51.

¹⁷² Cf. *Sermo ad Caes. eccl.*; *Ep.* 193; For the journey see: Perler, *Les Voyages de Saint Augustin*, 466–467.

less than adequate. Therefore he subsequently assumes a different role, that of judge. Until 405 he formulates sharp interrogations, justifying imperial coercive measures and violence. He almost seems to want to convince the imperial commissioners of the need thereof. In this period he depends on his experience as a Roman, interrogating judge much more than in the preceding and the following period.

Once he may depend on it, after 405, that the imperial measures will actually be carried out if necessary, Augustine's role changes once again. Now that he no longer needs to legitimise coercion and may trust in the imperial police support, he takes on the role of teacher. He does not so much want to frighten people as to pass on historical and ecclesiological information, as a result of which the Donatists will begin to understand that the unity of the Church is possible, salutary and therefore desirable. This is in accordance with the guideline he himself ultimately made explicit in *Ep.* 93, 1, 3: coercion is to go hand in hand with and be followed by instruction and formation. Otherwise it is a matter of power abuse.

After 408 Augustine shows that he is not only a teacher but also a mystagogue, concerned about the (re)formation of people. As from 411 he also reflects on the practices and aims of such a reformation. Precisely in *Ep.* 185, mainly studied because of the synthesis of his view on the use of coercion and violence, he also presents himself as a mystagogue and a theorist of mystagogy.¹⁷³

As was said before, as early as 399 Augustine hinted that he recognised the use of coercion and violence. In fact, this may even be noticed a few years before, for already in 395 he does not exclude violence, but then with respect to the Manicheans. From the fact that he never justifies violence against pagans and does not want to force them into the Church, we may conclude that he

¹⁷³ R. Markus was on the right track when he stated that Augustine considered exercise of free will compatible with a certain degree of coercion: so Augustine is not quite as inconsistent here as is usually thought. Markus also reduced coercion to a 'pastoral strategy'. See R. Markus, *Saeculum: History and Society in the Theology of St. Augustine* (Cambridge 1970), esp. 149–153, and H.A. Deane, 'review of *Saeculum*', in *American Historical Review* 76 (1971), 1139–1140. The discussion has been summarised in F.H. Russell, 'Persuading the Donatists: Augustine's Coercion by Words', in W.E. Klingshirn, M. Vessey (eds), *The Limits of Ancient Christianity: Essays on Late Antique Thought and Culture in Honor of R.A. Markus* (Michigan 1999), 115–130 (115–116). Cf. for his own point of view: 'Augustine's attack upon the Donatists was a precariously balanced blend of external discipline and inward nurturance' (129). For other interpretations of Augustine's position, also see: Lamirande, *Church, State and Toleration*, 19–28 and 72–73, in which he does not regard pastoral care but rather care for truth to be the goal and perspective in the light of which Augustine's legitimization of violence should be interpreted.

obviously regarded Manicheans as Christians. And what about the Donatists? He obviously wants to deal with them in quite a different way. This cannot but mean that in this case strategic considerations play a role. For the Donatists he first wanted to lay down rules for the purpose of dialogue.

Consequently for Augustine coercion may only be applied if there is a clear relationship. Especially the Donatists are often designated by him as brothers: *mali fratres, tamen fratres* (bad brothers, but still brothers).¹⁷⁴ It remains a fact that Augustine has always wanted to emphasise the bond with the Donatists. That is why he is opposed to their practice of rebaptism, because it raises the suggestion on the side of the Donatists that Donatists and Catholics are not already united to one another in one baptism.

In line with his conviction regarding baptism Augustine shows in all his letters that he regards the Donatist bishops as valid bishops. He also celebrated together with them.¹⁷⁵ Both Catholic and Donatist bishops are consistently designated by Augustine as (*co-*)*episcopi, fratres*,¹⁷⁶ and *consacerdotes*.¹⁷⁷ His suggestions regarding the treatment of Donatist bishops on their return to the Mother Church are in the same spirit. Augustine for instance suggests to have a returned Donatist bishop govern the one Catholic diocese together with the Catholic bishop, or to have the survivor of the two be the only bishop, or to have both resign and choose a new bishop in case they cannot cooperate. His view is to be reduced to both the sacrament of ordination and the striving for collegiality.¹⁷⁸ However, it must be admitted: this is incidentally also the repercussion of a 'common practice' that had arisen.¹⁷⁹

At the end of his life Augustine tersely summarises his own development. He mentions a book against the Donatists that has been lost, written between 397 and 400, in which he wrote that the strong violence against the *schismatici*

¹⁷⁴ *Sermo* 46, 31.

¹⁷⁵ H.E.J. Cowdrey, 'The Dissemination of St. Augustine's Doctrine of Holy Orders During the Later Patristic Age', *The Journal of Theological Studies* 20 (1969), 448–481 (448–451); cf. *Ep.* 128, 3.

¹⁷⁶ Cf. *c. Gaud.* 2, 13, 14. Augustine addresses the Donatist bishop Gaudentius as *frater*; *Emer.* 6 (Catholic); 3 (Donatists).

¹⁷⁷ Cf. *Ep.* 170, 1; 228, 1; 237; *Contra Epistulam Parmeniani* 2, 5, 10 (Catholic); 1, 2, 2 (Donatist). Both Catholic and Donatist bishops are addressed as *episcopus* and *coepiscopus*. See van Geest, 'Ordines', in *Augustinus-Lexikon* (in press).

¹⁷⁸ *Ep.* 128, 3.

¹⁷⁹ Cf. *Codex Canonum Ecclesiae Africanae*, can. 68; Cowdrey, 'The Dissemination', 453. However, Augustine's doctrine of orders has hardly influenced later councils and in the documents of later popes in the Church of the West Cyprian carried much more weight, cf. Cowdrey, 'The Dissemination', 458–465; 473.

was not at all to his liking. He does add, however, that at the time he had not yet realised to what extent the *disciplina* had led to their improvement.¹⁸⁰ Considering his course of development it is likely that these are the words of a mystagogue rather than of a rigid inquisitor and persecutor of heretics.

¹⁸⁰ *Retractationes* 2, 5.

Repression von Häretikern und anderen religiösen Gruppierungen im späteren Altertum, in der Sprache widerspiegelt

Gerard Bartelink

1 Eine *ars male dicendi*

Polemik gegen Häresien, Gruppierungen mit abweichenden doktrinären Auffassungen, kam in den frühchristlichen Schriften öfters vor. Da sie jedoch stark zeitbedingt war, hat man sich wenig Mühe gegeben, diese Art Schriften, als ihre Aktualität einmal vorüber war, für die Nachwelt zu behalten. Noch mehr galt das für die Antwort der Gegenpartei, die in der Geschichte unterbelichtet geblieben ist. Die wichtigste Quelle dafür findet sich in den Schriften der *catholica*: Zitate und Paraphrasen aus dem Werk des Gegners, die nur dazu dienten, widerlegt zu werden. Auf jeden Fall ist klar, dass auch die Gegenpartei sich nach Kräften beteiligte und dass auf beiden Seiten der Ton von einer Sachdiskussion zu heftigen und scharfen Invektiven abweichen konnte.¹

Obwohl das verwendete Vokabular sich mitunter unchristlich anhörte, wurden viele der gebrauchten Termini und Metaphern nachher wieder verwendet. Sowohl im Griechischen wie im Latein der frühen Christen bildete sich auch auf diesem Gebiet ein festes Basisvokabular. Termini und Ausdrücke, die ihre Brauchbarkeit erwiesen hatten, wurden traditionelle Elemente. So bekam die *ars bene dicendi*, wie die bekannte Definition der Redekunst lautete, ein Gegenstück in einer *ars male dicendi* (Kunst des Übelredens) und der Verwendung eines pejorativen Vokabulars. Es hat sich erwiesen, dass dieses im Laufe der Zeit sehr konsistent geblieben ist. Gebildete Christen mieden dabei die Verwendung von Redefiguren wie Wortspiel, Ironie und Antithese nicht.²

1 Vgl. Ilona Opelt, 'Hilarius von Poitiers als Polemiker', *Vigiliae Christianae* 27 (1973), 203–217; eadem, *Die Polemik in der christlichen lateinischen Literatur von Tertullian bis Augustin* (Heidelberg 1980); Gerard Bartelink, 'Die Invektiven gegen Nestorius und seine Häresie in Cassianus' *De incarnatione*', *Journal of Eastern Christian Studies* 60 (2008), 275–291.

2 Vgl. Ilona Opelt, *Die lateinischen Schimpfwörter und verwandte Erscheinungen. Eine Typologie* (Heidelberg 1965).

2 Ironische Verwendung von Eigennamen

Bisweilen eignete der Name eines angegriffenen Gegners sich für ein Wort- oder Klangspiel mit einer ironischen Färbung. Heutzutage würde ein solches Namensspiel um jemanden lächerlich zu machen ein tadelnswertes Mittel erscheinen, aber in der Rhetorik der Antike wurde daraus fast ein Argument entnommen. Schon Cicero sah darin in seinen Reden gegen Verres eine einmalige Gelegenheit.³

Bei diesem Verfahren bemühte man sich mehr um Klangeffekte als um etymologische Grundsätze. Wie griechische, frühchristliche Schriftsteller unbeschwert von dem Griechischen aus hebräische oder syrische Namen erklärten, war auch der Name von Manes (Mani), des Stifters des Manichäismus, nicht vor ihnen sicher. Man liess das griechische Wort *μανία* (Irrsinn) darin mitresonieren. Vorzugsweise knüpfte man den Namen Manes an das Partizip *μανείς* (wahnsinnig geworden) an, das fast einen identischen Klang hatte.⁴

Auch Julian der Abtrünnige war eine Zielscheibe, übrigens namentlich in nach seinem Tode gegen seine Pläne gehaltenen Reden. So deformierte Gregorius von Nazianze den Namen Julianos in Eidolianos.⁵

Hieronymus, der seine Gegner nicht selten mit Schimpfwörtern angriff, änderte im Traktat *Contra Vigilantium* den Namen seines Opponenten mal in *Dormitanti* (Schlafmütze).⁶

3 Bemerkenswerte Ausdrucksweisen bei profanen Schriftstellern

Weiter kann hier beiläufig erwähnt werden, dass bei profanen Schriftstellern gelegentlich bemerkenswerte Ausdrucksweisen zu signalisieren sind in Texten, in denen es sich um das Christentum handelt. Lucianus von Samosata sprach ausführlich über einige Christen oder Gestalten, welche als solche galten, wie Peregrinus Proteus.⁷ Es lohnt sich, einen Blick auf sein oft durch spöttische

3 Cicero, *In Verrem* II, 1, 121: *Verres – verres* (Wildschwein); Cicero bei Quintilianus, *Institutio oratoria* VI, 3, 55 *futurum ut omnia verreret* (*Verres – verrere* verschleppen).

4 Mani (Manes). Vgl. G.W.H. Lampe, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon* (Oxford 1961) s. v.

5 Gregorius von Nazianze, *Oratio contra Julianum* 4, 77 (SC 309, 199).

6 Hieronymus, *Contra Vigilantium*, PL 23, 355: *Vigilanti*, seu *verius Dormitanti*.

7 Vgl. M. Caster, *Lucien et la pensée religieuse de son temps* (Paris 1937), 351; P. de Labriolle, *La réaction païenne* (Paris 1934), 103–104; V. Daumer, *Lucien de Samosate et la secte chrétienne* (Paris 1957).

Absichten gezeichnetes Vokabular zu werfen. Als er zum Beispiel den Vorsteher einer Christengemeinde *θιασάρχης* (Leiter einer religiösen Gesellschaft) nannte, beabsichtigte er offensichtlich das Christentum auf eine Linie mit den Mysteriendiensten zu stellen.⁸

Es gab ebenfalls das Phänomen, dass Nichtgläubige mitunter mehr oder weniger zufällig ein christliches Wort aufschnappten um es darauf selber mit verächtlichem Spott zu benutzen. So wurde zum Beispiel *πιστοί/fideles* (Gläubige, wie die Christen sich selber nannten) zu einem Spottnamen. Man wollte darin die Bedeutung ‚Leichtgläubige‘ hören, das heisst Menschen, die nicht wissen, keine Menschen mit Einsicht. ‚O allerleichtgläubigste Leute‘ rief der Polemist Celsus aus.⁹ Bei den Nichtchristen im Westen hatte *fidelis* mitunter dieselbe negative Bedeutung, obschon Tertullianus das Wort in seinem *Apologeticum* in ein anderes Licht rückte, indem er suggerierte, *fidelis* habe bei Nichtchristen eben den günstigen Sinn ‚zuverlässig‘ und würde bei ihnen mit der für die Christen charakteristischen Ehrlichkeit in Geschäften assoziiert.¹⁰

Eine ganz andere Situation gab es im vierten Jahrhundert, als Christenkaiser das Sagen hatten. Libanius, der bekannteste griechische Redner aus dieser Zeit, war sich als Nichtchrist davon bewusst, dass er, wenn er eine Rede an einen Christenkaiser richtete, vorsichtig vorgehen musste um keine christlichen Gefühle zu verletzen. Dass in den Reden zu Ehren der Kaiser Constans und Constantius *θεός* frequent ist – statt des bei ihm üblichen Plurals *θεοί* – ist zweifellos aus Libanius’ Vorsicht zu erklären.¹¹

4 Das benutzte Material

Das umfangreiche Material (übrigens mit vielen stereotypen Formulierungen) zwingt zu Einschränkungen. Es wird hier namentlich aus lateinischen Texten aus der Periode zwischen dem Anfang des vierten Jahrhunderts und den ersten Jahrzehnten des fünften Jahrhunderts geschöpft, und zwar aus folgenden Kategorien: Pejorative Bezeichnungen der Kultusgebäude der Andersdenkende; Ablehnung der Verwendung durch Häretiker der in der *catholica* übli-

⁸ Lucianus, *Peregrinus Proteus* 11.

⁹ Bei Origenes, *Contra Celsum* II, 68.

¹⁰ Tertullianus, *Apologeticum* 46, 14: *Christianus et extra fidelis vocatur*.

¹¹ Vgl. G.J.M. Bartelink, *Wat wisten de heidenen van het oudchristelijk taalgebruik?* Antrittsrede (Nimwegen 1975), 17–18.

chen Amtsterminologie; deprezierende Bezeichnungen von Häretikern und Häresien; offizielle Verbote der Zusammenkünfte und Kultusfeier von Gruppierungen von Andersdenkenden. Quellen sind Texte frühchristlicher Schriftsteller und Konzilakten aus dem vierten Jahrhundert und besonders die offiziellen Verbotsdekrete, welche im sechszehnten Buch (*De haereticis*) des *Codex Theodosianus* (= *Cod. Theod.*) gesammelt worden sind.¹²

5 Pejorative Bezeichnungen der Kultusgebäude der Andersdenkende

Von der *catholica* aus wurde den Andersdenkenden der Vorwurf gemacht, dass sie sich zu Unrecht Termini zueigneten, worauf sie selbst das Alleinrecht beanspruchte. Nachdem eine Ketzerei verurteilt war, waren ihre Anhänger bei den liturgischen Feiern der *catholica* nicht mehr willkommen. ‚Man soll nicht gestatten, dass Häretiker in das Haus Gottes hineingehen, wenn sie in ihrer Ketzerei beharren‘ (Kanon 6 der nach 341 gehaltenen Synode von Laodicea).¹³ Und umgekehrt durften die eigenen Gläubigen auch nicht anderswo ihr Heil suchen: ‚Man soll nicht erlauben, dass diejenige, die zur Kirche gehören, in sogenannten Martyrien irgendeiner Sekte beten oder Heilung suchen.¹⁴

‚Die sogenannten Märtyrer der Montanisten verdienen diesen Ehrentitel nicht,‘ schreibt Apollinaris von Hierapolis, ‚und wenn jemand der unsrigen Zusammenkünfte in den Martyria der Montanisten besucht, kann er exkommuniziert werden.¹⁵

6 Conventiculum

Eine oft verwendete pejorative Bezeichnung der Kultusgebäude der Häretiker ist *conventiculum*. Illustrativ ist ein Text aus den *Etymologiae* des Isidorus von Sevilla, der in diesem Werk Worterklärungen und Ableitungen bietet, selbstverständlich auch Vieles aus der christlichen Welt.¹⁶ Bei der Besprechung von

12 *Codex Theodosianus*, ed. Th. Mommsen (Berlin 1905), 855–880 (*De haereticis* = XVI, 5).

13 E.J. Jonkers, *Acta et Symbola Conciliorum quae saeculo quarto habita sunt* (Textus Minores 19; Leiden 1954), 87.

14 Ibid. 87 (Kanon 9). Dazu ist zu bemerken, dass in frühchristlichen Texten nicht selten ‚sogenannt‘ (λεγόμενος) verwendet wurde um zu suggerieren, dass Häretiker zu Unrecht einen Terminus der *catholica* verwendeten und dass diese Verwendung unrechtmässig sei.

15 Bei Eusebius von Caesarea, *Historia ecclesiastica* V, 16, 22.

16 Isidorus von Sevilla, *Etymologiae* VIII, 1, 1 (*De ecclesia et synagoga*).

ecclesia kontrastiert er diesen Terminus mit den *conventicula* der Häretiker. Das ursprünglich griechische Wort *ecclesia* verweist nach ihm in seiner Grundbedeutung auf die Universalität der Kirche. Isidorus geht davon aus, dass schon aus was er als die ursprüngliche Bedeutung von *ecclesia* betrachtet, hervorgeht, dass die universelle Kirche – im Gegensatz zu den *conventicula haereticorum* – nicht auf einige Gebiete beschränkt geblieben ist.¹⁷ Der wörtliche ursprüngliche Sinn von *ecclesia* ist nach ihm lateinisch wiederzugeben mit *convocatio*, einem Terminus der klar ausdrücke, dass sie die Gläubigen von überall zusammenrufe, was durch das feste Epitheton *catholica* (*secundum totum*) noch verstärkt würde.¹⁸

In einer näheren Erläuterung bringt Isidorus die Konventikel der Häretiker und die alten Philosophenschulen mit einander in Verbindung, von denen einige, wie die Stoiker und die Peripatetiker, ihren Namen der Stelle, wo man gewöhnlich zusammenkam, entnommen hatten. Und hier taucht wieder das Wort *conventiculum* auf, und zwar von der Stelle, wo heidnische Philosophen zusammenkamen.¹⁹

Die negative Konnotation von *conventiculum* ist in den frühchristlichen Texten immer stärker geworden. Obwohl es im *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* zu den älteren Artikeln gehört, aus einer Zeit, wo man nur noch wenig auf den frühchristlichen Sprachgebrauch achtete, findet sich da schon die Bemerkung: *saepe cum contemptu dictum, apud ecclesiasticos praecipue de haereticis*.²⁰

Conventiculum hat zwei nicht immer deutlich zu unterscheiden Bedeutungen: Zusammenkunft und Kultusgebäude (wie ja auch *ecclesia* die christliche Gemeinde und das Kirchengebäude bezeichnen konnte). Illustrativ für die allmählich mehr negative Verwendung ist z. B. folgendes Zitat aus dem *Codex Theodosianus*: ‚Auf keinen Fall dürfen die verdorbenen Ketzler über *publica conventicula* (offizielle Gebäude um zusammen zu kommen) oder über Schlüpfwinkel oder geheime Stellen, wo man zusammentrifft, verfügen.‘²¹ Oder aus

17 *Ibid.*: *Non enim sicut conventicula haereticorum in aliquibus regionum partibus coartatur.*

18 *Ibid.* VIII, 6, 6.

19 *Ibid.* VIII, 6, 22. Vgl. Tertullianus (*Adversus Hermogenem* 8, 3; *De anima* 3, 1), der die heidnischen Philosophen ‚Patriarchen der Ketzler‘ nannte.

20 *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* 4, 844–845 s. v.; A. Blaise, *Dictionnaire Latin-français des auteurs chrétiens* (Turnhout 1954), 187 s. v.: ‚conciliabule d’hérétiques‘ (Cyprianus, *Epistula* 59, 14; *De Ecclesiae unitate* 12; Augustinus, *De haeresibus* 36). Auch im allgemeinen Sprachgebrauch konnte *conventiculum* schon früh eine pejorative Färbung haben; vgl. Tacitus, *Annales* XIV, 15: *exstructaque apud nemus conventicula et cauponae*.

21 *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 5, 20.

derselben Dekretensammlung: ‚Eine Gruppe, welche einem ketzerischen Aberglauben anhängt, darf durchaus nicht in eine Kirche zusammenkommen. Wenn das doch geschieht, soll eine solche Gruppierung unverzüglich aus seinen Konventikeln verjagt werden.‘²²

Für die Situation am Anfang des vierten Jahrhunderts ist der Text von Diocletianus’ Erlass gegen die Christen charakteristisch. Lactantius gibt die Bestimmung, dass es den Christen verboten war, Gebäude für ihre Zusammenkünfte aufzurichten, folgendermassen wieder: *ne christianis conventicula construere liceret*.²³ Bei dieser Verwendung von *conventiculum* ist zu bedenken, dass es am Anfang des vierten Jahrhunderts noch vielmehr als neutraler Terminus gelten konnte und namentlich, dass die Christen damals noch kaum über eine eigene Terminologie für ihre noch wenig zahlreichen Kirchen verfügten (die meisten werden damals unauffällige *domus ecclesiae*, Hauskirchen, gewesen sein).²⁴ Bei Arnobius klingt ein Echo dieses Dekrets.²⁵

7 Conciliabulum

Eine vergleichbare Entwicklung lässt sich bei *conciliabulum* feststellen, das aber weniger oft vorzukommen scheint. Die pejorative Bedeutung ist im vierten Jahrhundert noch ausgesprochener als bei *conventiculum*. Der Terminus bezeichnet ein kleines Gebäude oder eine kleine Gruppe, die irgendwo zusammenkommt.²⁶ Bischof Liberius von Rom bemerkt um 360 in einem Brief über die Arianer in Alexandria: ‚Sie haben sich ausserhalb der katholischen Kirche gestellt, aber – wie man sagt – sie haben sich schon wieder *conciliabula* gesi-

22 Ibid. XVI, 5, 10; vgl. Ambrosius, *Epistula* 41, 1: *Valentinianorum conventiculum*; Augustinus, *Quaestiones evangeliorum* II, 38: *unaquaeque haeresis ... aut obscuris atque occultis conventiculis curiositatem hominum decipit*.

23 Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 36, 1; vgl. *ibid.* 15, 7 (Constantius, Vater des Constantinus, wahrte das Dekret weniger streng) *conventicula, id est parietes, qui restitui poterant, dirui passus est*; vgl. auch *ibid.* 48, 9. In seiner lateinischen Wiedergabe der Stelle, wo Eusebius von Cäsarea die Verfolgung von Diocletianus beschreibt, greift Rufinus zweimal auf das Wort *conventiculum* zurück: *Historia ecclesiastica* VIII, 13, 13: *conventicula nostrorum*; VIII, 17, 9 *conventicula, in quibus orare consuerunt*.

24 Vgl. Chr. Mohrmann, ‚Les dénominations de l’église en tant qu’édifice en grec et en latin au cours des premiers siècles chrétiens‘, in Chr. Mohrmann, *Études sur le latin des Chrétiens* 4 (Rom 1977), 211–230.

25 *Adversus nationes* IV, 36.

26 Einige Texte in *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* 4, 38 s. v.; A. Blaise, *Dictionnaire*, s. v.

chert.²⁷ Dass es einen Niveauunterschied mit *conventiculum* gab, lässt sich zum Beispiel aus Kanon 71 des vierten Konzils von Karthago über die Donatistenfrage ablesen. Die Formulierung ist scharf: die *conventicula* der Donatisten soll man nicht Kirchen sondern *conciliabula* nennen.²⁸

Wenn man schon von Kirchen der Häretiker sprach, geschah das um der Deutlichkeit willen, aber danach wurde oft auf ein anderes Register umgeschaltet, ein Verfahren, das in den Erlassen des *Cod. Theod.* öfters angewendet wurde. Ähnliches findet sich bei Augustinus, der in einem Traktat gegen die Manichäer zuerst von einer *ecclesia* der Manichäer spricht, aber ein wenig weiter dasselbe Gebäude als ein *conclave* (einen verschlossenen Raum) bezeichnet.²⁹ Abfällige Bestimmungen begleiteten *conciliabulum* öfters, wie im folgenden Beispiel: ‚wenn nicht im Guten, dann eben im Bösen sollen sie (nämlich die Mitglieder einer Sekte) aus ihren verderblichen *conciliabula* verjagt werden‘ (*ex funestis conciliabulis*).³⁰

In einigen von Hieronymus' Bibelkommentaren, wo er das jüdische Volk als Präfiguration der Kirche interpretiert und ihre Feinde auf die Gegner der Kirche projiziert, bezeichnet er die Behausungen der Häretiker als *conciliabula*.³¹ Bemerkenswert ist übrigens, dass er in einem seiner Briefe die katholischen Märtyrerkirchen, die man *martyria* zu nennen pflegte, mit *martyrum conciliabula* andeutet.³² Es wird sich wohl um kleine Kirchen auf dem Lande handeln, wo damals die Märtyrerverehrung zu blühen anfang.

27 *extra ecclesiam catholicam foris positi dicuntur sibi conciliabula invenisse*. Das Schreiben des Liberius ist in die Briefsammlung des Lucifer von Calaris aufgenommen worden (*Epistula* 7; CSEL 14, 330).

28 Kanon 71: *Conventicula haereticorum non ecclesias sed conciliabula appellanda* (CCSL 149, 350).

29 *De moribus Manichaeorum* II, 6.

30 *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 5, 19.

31 *In Ezechielem* X, 32, 17: *conciliabula haereticorum*. Bei der Exegese von Hosea 6 (*In Osee* I, 1, 6–7; CCSL 76, 14) bezieht Hieronymus ‚das Haus von Israel‘ auf die Versammlungsorte der Häretiker (*referamus ad haereticorum conciliabula*) und ‚das Haus von Juda‘ auf die Kirche Christi.

32 *Epistula* 60. Vgl. J.H.D. Scourfield, *Consoling Heliodorus: A Commentary on Jerome Letter 60* (Oxford 1993), 172.

8 Sepulcrum

Die Invektive *sepulcrum* bildet eine schwere Kategorie. Schon lange bevor die *catholica* mitunter mit *sepulcrum* einen Versammlungsort der Häretiker bezeichnete, fungierte es als abschätzige Benennung eines heidnischen Tempels. Man beabsichtigte damit zu suggerieren, dass die in den Tempeln verehrten Götter nichts anderes seien als in der Vergangenheit verstorbene Menschen. Diese auf den Euhemerismus zurückgehende Auffassung findet sich schon um 200 bei Klemens von Alexandrien: ‚Man mag die heidnischen Heiligtümer schon euphemistisch „Tempel“ genannt haben, tatsächlich seien es nicht mehr als Gräber.‘³³ Ein gutes Jahrhundert später spricht Eusebius von Cäsarea von sogenannten Göttertempeln, die eigentlich Gräber von Toten sind.³⁴ Auch Arnobius hat ihnen einen rhetorischen Ausruf gewidmet: ‚Was davon zu denken, dass viele Tempel zwar goldene Kuppeln haben und hohe Fassaden, aber dass die Inschriften der Stifter beweisen, dass sie Asche und Gebeine bedecken und Gräber Gestorbener sind?‘³⁵

Auf beiden Seiten bediente man sich derselben pejorativen Terminologie. In polemischen Schriften heidnischer Schriftsteller konnten die christlichen Kirchen als Gräber bezeichnet werden, wobei namentlich die Märtyrergäber Zielscheibe waren. So spricht Julian der Abtrünnige einige Male von den Gräbern der Galiläer.³⁶

9 Spelunca, antrum

‚Höhle‘ und ‚Grotte‘ werden ebenfalls als deprezierende Termini eingesetzt. So lesen wir in einer Proklamation aus 415, dass die ‚verderblichen Höhlen‘ (nl. die

33 *Protrepticus* III, 44, 4; IV, 49, 2; X, 91, 1.

34 *Praeparatio evangelica* II, 5, 19.

35 *Adversus nationes* 6, 6: *Quid quod multa ex his templa, quae tholis sunt aureis et sublimibus elata fastigiis, auctorum conscriptionibus conprobatur contegere cineres atque ossa et functorum esse corporum sepulturas?*

36 Julianus Apostata, *Misopogon* 344A; *Contra Galilaeos* 335C. Ammianus Marcellinus bezeichnete die Kirchen von Edessa als *sepulcra*: *Res gestae* XVIII, 7, 7; XIX, 3, 1. Man sehe auch die Notiz zu *sepulchrum hoc* in: J. den Boeft, J.W. Drijvers, D. den Hengst, H.C. Teitler, *Philological and Historical Commentary on Ammianus Marcellinus XXII* (Groningen 1995), 206. Vgl. auch Eunapius, *Vitae Sophistarum* 472; dazu G.J.M. Bartelink, ‚Eunape et le vocabulaire chrétien‘, *Vigiliae Christianae* 23 (1969), 293–303 (300). Auch *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 5, 7 (381, gegen die Manichäer): *illud etiam huic adiicimus sanctioni, ne in conventiculis oppidorum, ne in urbibus claris consueta feralium mysteriorum sepulcra constituent.*

Kirchen) der Montanisten konfisziert werden müssen. Man darf sie keineswegs Kirchen nennen: *antra feralia* ist ein Name, der besser passt (*non ecclesiae, sed antra debent feralia nominari*).³⁷

Etwa ein halbes Jahrhundert früher hatte Bischof Cyrillus von Jerusalem schon ein Kirchengebäude einer häretischen Gruppierung als eine Höhle bezeichnet. In einer Taufkatechese gibt er seinen Zuhörern folgende Warnung mit auf den Weg: ‚Wenn du in eine andere Stadt kommst, sollst du nicht ganz im Allgemeinen fragen, wo die Kirche ist. Auch die andere, das heisst die Ketzerereien der Gottlose, versuchen ja ihre Höhlen Kirchen zu nennen.‘³⁸ Cyrillus betont so, dass sie kein einziges Recht haben, ihre Versammelorte Kirchen zu nennen.

Bei der Bezeichnung ‚Höhle‘ ist zu bemerken, dass in dergleichen Texten die Worte mitspielen können, die Christus im Tempel von Jerusalem an die Verkäufer und Geldwechsler richtete: ‚Mein Haus ist ein Haus des Gebets, aber ihr habt es zu einer Räuberhöhle gemacht.‘³⁹

Auch später wurde eine Kirche der Häretiker mitunter als *spelunca* bezeichnet: Gregor der Grosse sprach von einer ‚Höhle häretischer Verdorbenheit‘ (*spelunca pravitatis haereticae*) in Bezug auf eine frühere arianische Kirche, welche wieder in die Hände der Katholiken gekommen war.⁴⁰

10 Neutrale Terminologie

Zur Bezeichnung der Stellen, wo abweichende Gruppierungen zusammenkamen, konnten auch mehr oder weniger neutrale Termini dienen, welche mit ihrer allgemeinen Bedeutung eine Meidung der in der *catholica* gangbaren Benennungen ermöglichten und somit doch eine Degradierung bedeuteten. *Locus* kann hier als Beispiel dienen. Im *Codex Theodosianus* finden sich unter anderen folgende Formulierungen: ‚die Stellen, wo sie zusammenkommen‘; ‚die

37 *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 5, 57.

38 *Taufkatechese* 18, 26.

39 Mt 21:13; vgl. Mk 11:17; Lk 19:46.

40 *Registrum* 4,19. Einige weitere Beispiele: Der Dichter Arator (*De Actibus Apostolorum* I, 735) spricht von der Höhle der Synagoge, in der die Schlange des Unglaubens zischet: *Perfidiae coluber synagogae sibilat antro*. Wenn Johannes Chrysostomus den Christen in Antiochien Vorwürfe macht, weil sie die Synagogen besuchen, bezeichnet er diese einige Male als Räuberhöhlen (*Adversus Iudaeos* 1, PG 48, 849; *ibid.* 5, PG 48, 904; *ibid.* 7, PG 48, 914–915).

Stellen selbst werden beschlagnahmt‘;⁴¹ ,dass alle Stellen, wo Altäre aufgestellt werden, konfisziert werden sollten‘;⁴² ,die Häretiker dürfen keine Stelle haben um ihre Mysterien zu feiern‘ (*mysteriorum locus*).⁴³

Aus all diesem geht hervor, dass seit etwa dem Ende des vierten Jahrhunderts die Rechte religiöser Minderheitsgruppierungen sehr eingeschränkt wurden. Auch die Bezeichnung *latibula* (Schlupfwinkel, Verstecke), womit von Anhängern einer Sekte für die Zusammenkünfte zur Verfügung gestellte Häuser gemeint sind (Termini wie *domus*, *habitacula* oder *aedificia* finden sich in diesem Zusammenhang oft), weist darauf hin. Daneben werden *praedia* und *fundi* genannt als Stellen für die Zusammenkünfte, das heisst Landhäuser und Güter ausserhalb der Stadmauer, wo man nicht so leicht auffiel und Kontrolle weniger effizient war. Der Tenor der Dekrete blieb auch bei diesen mehr neutralen Bezeichnungen durchaus streng. Man drohte mit harten Strafen, wie Konfiskierung für die Besitzer⁴⁴ und Geldbussen für die Verwalter. Besonders in den offiziellen Erlassen der späteren Zeit wurden dergleichen Bezeichnungen häufig pejorative Adjektiva hinzugefügt.

11 Verbot von Usurpation der Amtsbezeichnungen usw. der catholica

„Niemand soll es wagen die hochheiligen Namen der katholischen Geistlichen mit besudeltem Herzen unrechtmässig zu gebrauchen‘ (*pollutis mentibus usurpare*).⁴⁵ Abgetrennte Gruppierungen, welche wegen Abweichungen von der offiziellen Lehre durch die kirchlichen Instanzen verurteilt wurden, haben – so ist der hinterliegende Gedanke – auch das Recht verspielt sich der in der *catholica* gangbaren Titulatur zu bedienen. Namentlich in den antihäretischen Dekreten des *Codex Theodosianus* (Buch 16) wurde den Häresien oft das Recht untersagt um ihren Vorstehern den Bischofstitel zu verleihen. So wurden die Schiedslinien entschieden und kräftig markiert, wie in der folgenden Bestim-

⁴¹ *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 5, 45 (Ravenna, 408): *Ipsa etiam loca iuri publico sociari.*

⁴² *Ibid.* XVI, 5, 4 (anno 376): *publicari loca omnia, in quibus falso religionis obtentu altaria locarentur.*

⁴³ *Ibid.* XVI, 5, 6: *Nullus haereticis mysteriorum locus, nulla ad exercendam animi obstinatoris dementiam pateat occasio.*

⁴⁴ *Ibid.* XVI, 5, 3 (anno 372, gegen die Manichäer): *domus et habitacula, in quibus profana institutio docetur, fisci vicibus indubitanter adsciscantur.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* XVI, 5, 26.

mung über die Vorsteher der Apollinari: ‚Sie müssen ohne den Bischofstitel auskommen und den Namen dieser Würdigkeit aufgeben.‘⁴⁶

Selbst die Bezeichnung ‚Christ‘ wurde bisweilen als unpassend für Andersdenkende betrachtet. Nach ihrer offiziellen Verurteilung seien sie ja nicht mehr Nachfolger Christi, sondern sie gehen nur ihren eigenen Führern nach.

Nach Nestorius' Verurteilung in 430 wurden seine Anhänger hart angegriffen. ‚Sie dürfen sich nicht mehr Christ nennen‘, lesen wir in einem Erlass. ‚Nestorianer ist besser, nach ihrem verurteilten Führer.‘⁴⁷ Anderswo wird ebenfalls von einer häretischen Gruppierung gesagt: ‚weil man sie selbst nicht als Christ betrachten kann.‘⁴⁸

Und was die Märtyrer der Sekten betrifft, diese können ebensowenig Anspruch auf diesen Ehrentitel erheben.⁴⁹ Es ist ja die Sache, zu welcher der Märtyrer steht, die einen zum Märtyrer macht. *Martyrem non facit poena, sed causa*, sagte schon Cyprianus, und seine kurze Formulierung behielt ihre Gültigkeit.⁵⁰

Die Bezeichnung *antistites*, welche die Eunomianer für ihre Chefs verwendeten, wurde ihnen ebenfalls entsagt: ‚Ihre Führer sind *ministri sceleris*. Die Bezeichnung *antistites* diene nur um den Menschen Sand in die Augen zu streuen.‘⁵¹

Auch die im *Codex Theodosianus* für die Ernennung häretischer Geistliche verwendete Terminologie verdient unsere Aufmerksamkeit. So ist der Gebrauch von *creare* bemerkenswert wegen der Meidung der katholischen Terminologie *eligere episcopum*.⁵² Seit dem vierten Jahrhundert war *electio/eligere* in der *catholica* die gebräuchlichste Bezeichnung für die Bischofswahl. Somit ist der Ausdruck *facere episcopum* ebenfalls auffällig.⁵³

46 Ibid. XVI, 5, 14: *episcopi nomine destituti appellationem dignitatis amittant*.

47 Ibid. XVI, 5, 66 (Konstantinopel, Erlass aus 435).

48 Ibid. XVI, 5, 5: *cum nec Christiani quidem habeantur*.

49 Vgl. Anmerkung 15.

50 Vgl. Gregorius Magnus, *Moralia* 18, 20; *Registrum* II, 51.

51 *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 5, 16.

52 Cyprianus hat *creare* für den Ausdruck *creare pseudo-episcopos* reserviert. In *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 5, 57 wird von den Montanisten gesagt: ‚Sie müssen wissen, dass ihnen jede Möglichkeit um Geistliche zu ernennen, entnommen worden ist‘ (*ademptam sibi ... creandi clericos omnem intellegant facultatem*). Vgl. auch *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 5, 58 (in bezug auf die Eunomianer): ‚Sie sollen es nicht wagen, *clerici* zu ernennen oder sich selbst ernennen zu lassen‘ (*creare vel creari*).

53 *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 5, 4: ‚Auf keinen Fall müssen sie ermächtigt werden, Bischöfe zu ernennen‘ (*Nulla his episcoporum faciendorum praebeatur auctoritas*).

12 Bezeichnungen der Häresien

In den offiziellen Dekreten dominiert das Streben nach Sachlichkeit und Deutlichkeit, das der Kanzleisprache eigen ist. Diese Texte sind weithin uniform. Doch fehlen auch hier negative Ausdrücke keineswegs, wie z.B. *pestiferum dogma*, *prava religio*, *sacrilegus ritus*, *profana mysteria* und *haeretica superstitio*.⁵⁴

Der seit den Anfangszeiten des Christentums gangbare Terminus *haeresis* ist unentbehrlich geblieben. Das lateinische Äquivalent *secta* konnte neutraler sein, wie aus den spätlateinischen Verbindungen *orthodoxa secta* und *catholica secta* hervorgeht.⁵⁵

Die pejorativen Adjektiva sind zahlreich. Aus der Vielheit sei hier *novus* hervorgehoben, das im allgemeinen Sprachgebrauch auch eine ungünstige Färbung haben konnte, als Bezeichnung einer Sache, die mit der Tradition strittig war. In ihrem eigenen Sprachgebrauch haben die Christen, wie öfters, einen schon bestehenden Trend aufgegriffen. Für sie war alles, was von der Schrift und von der traditionellen Lehre abwich, als *novus* verdächtig.⁵⁶

13 Conventus, coetus

Neben den oben schon erwähnten Termini *conventiculum* und *conciliabulum* als Bezeichnungen von Zusammenkünften abweichender Gruppierungen werden im *Codex Theodosianus* häufig *conventus* und *coetus* verwendet. Seit dem vierten Jahrhundert kommt *conventus*, ebenso wie das Verbum *convenire*, in einem religiösen Kontext vor. So schrieb Lucifer von Cagliari einen Traktat: *De non conveniendo cum Arianis* (Man soll die Liturgie nicht zusammen mit den Arianern feiern). In den Dekreten wurden oft deprezierende Adjektiva hinzu-

54 *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 5, 58 (*pestiferum dogma*); *ibid.* XVI, 5, 52 (*prava religio*); *ibid.* XVI, 5, 52 (*sacrilegus ritus*); *ibid.* XVI, 5, 36 (*profana mysteria*); *ibid.* XVI, 5, 10 und XVI, 5, 51 (*haeretica superstitio*).

55 *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 5, 42 und XVI, 5, 44 (*catholica secta*); *ibid.* XVI, 5, 57 (*orthodoxa secta*).

56 In *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 5, 43: (eine Gruppierung, die sich Caelicoli nannte) *qui nescio cuius dogmatis novi conventus habent*. In diesem Zusammenhang ist auch auf den Ausdruck *nova facere* hinzuweisen, womit den Andersdenkenden vorgeworfen wurde, dass sie Schrifttexte aus ihrem Verband rückten und eigenmächtig zu etwas Neuem kombinierten. Auch wurde den Häresien mitunter vorgeworfen, dass sie oft nicht mehr als eine neue Variante einer früher schon verurteilten Sekte bilden und somit schon verurteilt seien.

gefügt, wie im folgenden Beispiel: ‚Wir bestimmen, dass die unverschämten Manichäer und ihre verächtlichen Zusammenkünfte gebändigt werden müssen.⁵⁷

Dasselbe gilt für *coetus*. Sowohl *conventus* als *coetus* wurden auch neutral verwendet (z.B. *coetus illicitus*). Aus dem Sprachgebrauch der offiziellen Erlasse seit dem Ende des vierten Jahrhunderts geht hervor, dass die Zeit der Debatte grossenteils vorüber war. Die weltlichen Behörden haben die Kanones der Konzile und Synoden in strenge Erlasse übertragen und den Drohungen strenge Strafen hinzugefügt. Hier spricht eine andere Instanz, welche abrechnet mit denjenigen, die den Kampf verloren haben.

14 Fazit

Wir haben festgestellt, dass sich in den polemischen Schriften der christlichen Schriftsteller gegen die Häretiker und in den offiziellen Verbotsdekreten viele Beispiele einer abwertenden Terminologie finden. Einige Kategorien, namentlich in lateinischen Texten aus der Periode zwischen 300 und 450, sind in diesem Artikel besprochen worden. Es handelt sich um in sprachlicher Hinsicht besonders interessantes Material. Eine Menge pejorativ gefärbter Wörter (überwiegend Substantive und Adjektive) wurde unterschiedslos für irgendwelche Ketzerei verwendet. Allmählich hatte man eine feste, traditionell gewordene Reihe von Schimpfwörtern zur Verfügung.

57 *Cod. Theod.* XVI, 5, 36.

Reception and Interpretation of Jesus' Teaching of Love for Enemies in Ancient Christianity

Riemer Roukema

According to the Gospel of Matthew's Sermon on the Mount and the Gospel of Luke's Sermon on the Plain Jesus summoned his disciples not to resist evildoers and to be compliant with their adversaries. If someone strikes them on one cheek, they are not to strike back but to turn the other cheek too. They shall love their enemies, do good to those who hate them, and pray for those who abuse or persecute them. By this non-violent behaviour Jesus' disciples will imitate God and be God's children.¹

The fact that these instructions occur in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke, but not in the Gospel of Mark, implies that most probably they derive from Q, the sayings source which, for the most part, consisted of Jesus' teaching. There are no historical-critical reasons to deny the gist of these exhortations to Jesus.² His teaching is echoed by Paul who exhorts the Roman Christians to bless those who persecute them, not to repay evil for evil, to live—in so far as it depends on them—peaceably with all people, not to avenge themselves, but to put to shame their enemies by doing good to them; in this way they will overcome evil with good.³

We might wonder whether Jesus and Paul always practised their own counsels, since the same Gospels and Paul's own epistles affirm that both could severely censure their adversaries, respectively the scribes and Pharisees and the preachers who taught the Gospel message in a way different from the apostle.⁴ Yet according to the synoptic Gospels Jesus passively underwent his arrest

¹ Matt 5:38–48; Luke 6:27–35.

² U. Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus (Mt 1–7)* (EKK I, 1; Düsseldorf, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2002⁵), 256–259; 385; 402.

³ Rom 12:14, 17–21; cf. 1 Thess 5:15; 1 Pet 3:9 and J. Fitzmyer, *Romans: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AnCB 33; London 1993), 655–659.

⁴ See Matt 15:1–20; 23:1–36; Luke 11:37–52; 2 Cor 11:13–15; Gal 1:6–9; Phil 3:2. It may be added that sometimes Jesus was friendly toward a scribe (Mark 12:28–34) and that some Pharisees appreciated him (Luke 13:31; John 3:1–2; 7:50–51; 19:39);

and the process that led to his crucifixion; in this respect he was consistent with his own instructions.

The theme of this contribution is not to retrieve whom Jesus considered as the enemies that his disciples had to love and for whom they had to pray, or what this love meant in their daily lives, but how these sayings were understood by a limited number of authors in the first centuries of Christianity. Furthermore, we will regularly pay attention to the question how far the Christians really practised these lofty instructions. As a matter of fact, this investigation on the ancient interpretation of these texts, rather than yielding a comprehensive survey of the extent to which Christians of those centuries renounced violence, intends to offer only a cross-section from the immense literature of that time with regard to our theme.

Of course we have to distinguish the various contexts in which the words of Jesus and Paul have been received and interpreted. It matters whether an author writes before or after Constantine's turn to Christianity in 313 CE, whether he writes to Christians or to authorities who either oppose or favour his religion, whether a quotation or allusion has consciously been included into an apology or an occasional homily or another discourse or whether an author writes a commentary on a New Testament writing or delivers a series of homilies on it and is therefore forced to say something on the texts under discussion. The following arrangement reflects these different contexts.

1 Before Constantine

How did Christians refer to and apply the instructions to love their enemies, to pray for their persecutors, and to renounce violence and revenge in the first centuries of their existence, when their convictions started to spread in the Roman empire as a unknown religion that met with much suspicion? We will first pay attention to texts addressed to Christians.

1.1 *Texts Addressed to Christians*

The beginning of the *Didache* (ca. 100 CE) immediately reminds us of this teaching in the introduction of 'the path of life'.⁵ Walter Bauer claimed that the author understood these instructions of prayer and love for enemies and persecutors in the sense of a following counsel, 'Do not hate anyone—but reprove

⁵ *Didache* 1:3–5 (LCL 24).

some, pray for others, and love still others more than yourself',⁶ which sounds less radical. Bauer concluded that Jesus' command to love one's enemies is thus enervated,⁷ but this does not hold. Other scholars think that the teaching to bless those who curse you, to pray for your enemies and to love those who hate you (*Did.* 1:3) is the beginning of an insertion into an older Jewish tradition of two ways, one of which leads to life and the other to death. The existence of this tradition can be deduced from other works, so that the seams of the insertion into the *Didache* are still visible.⁸ This implies that the compiler did not want to enervate the instructions on prayer and love for enemies that he added to his text on the two ways. Apparently this text, which started with the commands to love God and one's neighbour in a more general sense (*Did.* 1:2), was not far-reaching enough for him, so that he inserted Jesus' words on love and prayer for enemies.

In the beginning of the second century CE Polycarp of Smyrna exhorts the Philippian Christians to pray for the authorities, 'as well as for those who persecute and hate you and for the enemies of the cross'.⁹ In the homily that has been preserved as the *Second Epistle of Clement* the preacher asserts that, when outsiders hear the teaching on love for enemies, they are astonished by its extraordinary goodness. But when they discover that the Christians' actions do not match their words since they fail to love not only those who hate them, but even those who love them, the outsiders ridicule them and blaspheme God's name.¹⁰ The preacher admits here that in his community the practice of love is more difficult than the principle.

At the end of the second and the beginning of the third centuries CE Clement of Alexandria repeatedly reminds both the newly baptized and the advanced Christians of the commandments of prayer and love for their enemies.¹¹ From

6 *Didache* 2:7 (LCL 24).

7 W. Bauer, 'Das Gebot der Feindesliebe und die alten Christen', *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 27 (1917), 37–54 (41–42); also in W. Bauer, *Aufsätze und kleine Schriften*, ed. G. Strecker (Tübingen 1967), 235–252 (239–240).

8 See W. Rordorf and A. Tuller, *La doctrine des douze apôtres (Didachè)* (SC 248^{bis}; Paris 1998), 22–34; 84–86; H. van de Sandt and D. Flusser, *The Didache: Its Jewish Sources and its Place in Early Judaism and Christianity* (CRINT 3, 5; Assen, Minneapolis 2002), 40–48; 55–80; 161. The 'other works' are *Barnabas* 18–20 (SC 172) and *Doctrina apostolorum* (SC 248^{bis}, 203–210).

9 Polycarp, *Philippians* 12:3 (LCL 24).

10 *Clement* 13:2–4 (LCL 24).

11 *Paedagogus* I, 70, 3; III, 92, 3 (SC 70; 158); *Stromateis* II, 2, 2; II, 42, 3; II, 90, 1; IV, 61, 2; IV, 93, 3; IV, 95, 1; VII, 84, 5 (SC 38; 463; 428); *Dives* 22 (LCL 92); cf. also *Protrepticus* 108, 5 (SC 2^{bis}); *Dives* 18, 4 (LCL 92).

the same period we have some of the early writings of Tertullian of Carthage, in which he does not hesitate to confront his readers with these instructions.¹² A few decades later Origen of Alexandria confirms this. He says that if you repay your enemies good for evil, as God does, the heavenly image of God is in you and you are God's son.¹³ Origen counts those who are not able to behave in this way as weak believers who, as little children, still have to be fed with milk.¹⁴

Sometimes Origen explicates whom he considers to be the enemies and what is meant by the love one has to display to them. He puts that circumcised Jews hate the Christians and pretends that Christians are not hostile toward the Jews. Yet he calls the Jews enemies because they have a zeal for God, but lack the right knowledge. Origen thinks that Jesus' commandment 'love your enemies' applies to them.¹⁵ In his conflict with the leaders of the Alexandrian church he writes that he considers it his duty to treat them with mercy rather than hate and to pray for them rather than cursing them, 'since we have been created to bless and not to curse'.¹⁶ In a sermon on the Song of Songs Origen distinguishes the commandment of love toward the neighbour from the commandment of love toward the enemy. According to Christ one has to love his neighbour as oneself, but concerning the enemy he does not say that one has to love him 'as oneself'. Therefore it suffices to love our enemies (but not 'as oneself') and not to hate them, Origen says.¹⁷ According to Ulrich Luz this passage means that in Origen's view it is sufficient for Christians not to hate their enemies,¹⁸ but with regard to the many quotations of the instruction to love one's enemies in his works this seems untenable.

Neither did Cyprian of Carthage withhold Jesus' radical words from his audience.¹⁹ Just as the *Didache*, also the Syriac version of the *Didascalia Apostolorum*

12 *De spectaculis* 16, 6; *De oratione* 3, 4; 29, 2; *De patientia* 6, 5; 10, 3; cf. 8, 2 (CCSL 1).

13 *Hom. in Psalmos* 37, 1; 38, 1 (SC 411); *Fragmenta in Lucam* 73 (FC 4, 2); *Comm. in Ioannem* XX, 106–107; XX, 141–151; XX, 290–292; XX, 309 (SC 290); cf. *Fragmenta in ep. ad Romanos* 53 (*JThS* 14 [1913], 22); *Comm. in ep. ad Romanos* IX, 14; IX, 19; IX, 22–24 (AGLB 34). See also Matt 5:45 and 1 Cor 15:49.

14 *Hom. in Iesu Nave* 9, 9 (SC 71).

15 *Catenae in Psalmum* 118, 98a (SC 189); cf. Rom 10:2 and G. Sgherri, *Chiesa e Sinagoga nelle opere di Origene* (Studia Patristica Mediolanensia 13; Milan 1982), 28–41.

16 *Epistula ad caros*, in Jerome, *Contra Rufinum* II, 18 (SC 303).

17 *Hom. in Canticum* II, 8 (SC 37^{bis}); cf. Matt 22:39.

18 Luz, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus* (Mt 1–7), 411.

19 *De dominica oratione* 17; *De zelo et livore* 15; *De bono patientiae* 5; 16 (CCSL 3A); *Testimonia ad Quirinium* III, 49 (CCSL 3).

rum gives the commandment to bless and love the enemies in the first chapter. Furthermore it is repeated twice later on.²⁰

We conclude that prominent Christian authors of the second and third centuries did not hesitate to confront the believers with this aspect of Jesus' teaching.

1.2 *Texts Addressed to the Authorities and to Critics of Christianity*

Yet this teaching was not only represented to the faithful with the intention that they behave accordingly. Since the early Christians were looked at with Argus' eyes and were sometimes exposed to physical persecutions, several of their spokesmen addressed the authorities or individual critics in order to defend their religion and to prove that they were peaceful people. In this context it is referred to time and again that Christians were taught to love their enemies and to pray for them.

In his *Apology* Aristides writes (124–125 CE) that Christians endeavour to do good to their enemies.²¹ Justin Martyr, in his first *Apology* and in his *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, also points to Jesus' teaching of prayer and love for enemies.²² To Trypho Justin declares that Christians also pray for the Jews, namely that Christ may have mercy on them.²³ Athenagoras, in his *Supplication* to the emperors Marcus Aurelius and his son Commodus, repeatedly refers to the Christians' teaching to love their enemies.²⁴ Theophilus of Antioch quotes this instruction in his work *To Autolycus* (ca. 180 CE).²⁵ An anonymous author writes in his epistle *To Diognetus* (ca. 200 CE?), 'They [the Christians] are reviled and they bless' and 'Christians love those who hate them'.²⁶ In the end of the second century CE Tertullian, in response to the hatred toward Christians, utters the same arguments in his *Apologeticum*, and again later on (212 CE) in his pamphlet *To Scapula*, who was the proconsul of Carthage.²⁷

Also in the last Great Persecution of Christians in the Roman empire, at the beginning of the fourth century CE, it was argued that they required the

20 *Didascalia Apostolorum* 1; 15; 21 (CSCO 401–402; 407–408).

21 *Apologia* 15, 4 (SC 470, 288–289; 238–239; 404).

22 I *Apologia* 14, 3; 15, 9–10; 16, 1–2; cf. 57,1; *Dialogus* 35, 8; 85, 7 (ed. Goodspeed).

23 *Dialogus* 96, 3; 108, 3; 133, 6 (ed. Goodspeed).

24 *Supplicatio* 1, 4; 11, 1–3; 12, 3; 34, 3 (SC 379).

25 *Ad Autolycum* III, 14 (ed. Grant).

26 *Ad Diognetus* 5, 15; 6, 6; cf. 5, 11 (LCL 25).

27 *Apologeticum* 31, 2; 37, 1–3 (CCSL 1); *Ad Scapulam* 1, 3; 4, 7 (CCSL 2).

hatred and violence of their persecutors with prayer and love—thus Arnobius of Sicca²⁸ and Lactantius.²⁹

Origen had a different retort to the criticism that the philosopher Celsus had expressed seventy years before, around 177–180 CE. Celsus had noticed that Jesus' instruction to turn the other cheek if one is struck contradicted the commandments given by the God of the Jews. Moreover, he had contended that Jesus' commandment was nothing new, since Plato had also written that one ought not to retaliate when he is wronged and that one should not take revenge.³⁰ Concerning the first point Origen remarks that apparently 'Celsus derived some vague notions from those who say that the God of the gospel is different from the God of the law'. But he points out that the expression of turning the other cheek also occurs in the Old Testament, viz. in Lamentations 3:30, 'He will give a cheek to the man who smites him and shall be filled with reproaches'. Origen concludes that the gospel does not contradict the God of the law.³¹ Concerning the correspondence with Plato he maintains that Jesus' teaching was far more effective than the former's, since uneducated people could not understand Plato and even people who had a general education could understand him only with difficulty.³²

Origen also goes into Celsus' view that inferior deities—Celsus calls them satraps and ministers in the air and on earth—could do much harm if they were insulted, namely by the Christians. Origen replies that even a wise *man* would not want to harm anyone, but would try to improve people who insulted him. He suggests that these divine satraps and ministers are worse than Lycurgus, the lawgiver of the Spartans, who did not take revenge on the man who had struck out his eye, but persuaded him to study philosophy. Origen also quotes the answer that Zeno, the founder of Stoic philosophy, had given to a man who had said to him, 'I'll be damned if I will not take vengeance on you'; he replied, 'And I, if I do not make you my friend'. Subsequently Origen refers to the Christians, who behave according to Jesus' instruction to love their enemies and to pray for those who insult them.³³ Thus he argues that all these people surpass Celsus' deities.

28 *Adversus nationes* IV, 36 (CSEL 4).

29 *Divinae institutiones* V, 12, 4; also VI, 18, 10; VI, 19, 8 (CSEL 19); section numbers according to A. Bowen, P. Garnsey (trans.), *Lactantius: Divine Institutes* (TTH 40; Liverpool 2003).

30 *Contra Celsum* VII, 18; VII, 58 (SC 150); cf. Plato, *Crito* 49B–E.

31 *Contra Celsum* VII, 25 (SC 150, where, on p. 70, l. 15, διαγόννα has to be corrected to σιαγόννα). Trans. H. Chadwick, *Origen: Contra Celsum* (Cambridge 1980).

32 *Contra Celsum* VII, 61 (SC 150).

33 *Contra Celsum* VIII, 35; cf. VII, 46; VIII, 41 (SC 150); Plutarchus, *Vita Lycurgi* 11 (LCL 46);

We see that Jesus' counsels were employed apologetically in order to demonstrate the lofty morality that was taught to Christians and that—according to the apologists—they practised as well. Although these apologies were addressed to the authorities, they were read by the Christians themselves as well, and therefore we may assume that these texts also served to confirm their own convictions and to urge them to behave accordingly.

1.3 *Doctrinal Debates*

Furthermore, among Christians adhering to competing traditions these instructions were quoted in debates on Jesus' teaching and his relationship to the Old Testament. In his books *Against heresies* Irenaeus of Lyons confronts Simon Magus and Carpocrates with Jesus' instruction on love and prayer for enemies, which contradicted their view that a human being was free to experience all sort of things, evil acts included.³⁴ Irenaeus confronted the Valentini-ans, whose docetic view was that the heavenly Christ could not suffer, with the fact that the Lord had really suffered on the cross, that he had prayed there for his adversaries and thus had put his own words into practice.³⁵ Against the Marcionite conviction—picked up by Celsus as well, as we saw—that the commandments of the Mosaic law contradicted the gospel and therefore did not apply to Christians, Irenaeus puts that Jesus had not abolished the law but fulfilled and extended it. He then discusses the Sermon on the Mount, which contains Jesus' counsel to love one's enemies.³⁶

In his *Exhortation to chastity*, Tertullian admits the difference between the ancient rule 'eye for eye, tooth for tooth' and the new commandment not to repay evil for evil, and declares that the one God revoked the old order, just as a tree that has to be pruned.³⁷ In his polemics with Marcion Tertullian also acknowledges that Christ teaches 'a new patience' (*nouam patientiam*), but he endeavours to find traces of this in the Old Testament prophets. Contrary to the Marcionites, Tertullian was not ready to see an antithesis between the law and the gospel, but emphasized their continuity and the fulfilment of the former in the latter.³⁸

De cohibenda ira 14 / *Moralia* 462C (LCL 337). Other Hellenistic testimonies to a friendly attitude toward enemies are found Seneca, *De otio* I, 4 (ed. Bourguery and Waltz) and Epictetus, *Dissertationes* III, 22, 53–64 (LCL 218). See M. Reiser, 'Love of Enemies in the Context of Antiquity', *New Testament Studies* 47 (2001), 411–427.

34 *Adversus haereses* II, 32, 1 (SC 294).

35 *Adversus haereses* III, 18, 5 (SC 211); cf. Luke 23:34.

36 *Adversus haereses* IV, 13, 1–3 (SC 100); cf. *Demonstratio* 96 (SC 406).

37 *De exhortatione castitatis* 6, 2–3 (CCSL 2); cf. Ex 21:24; Rom 12:17.

38 *Contra Marcionem* IV, 16, 1–16 (SC 456); V, 14, 11–14 (SC 483).

2 After Constantine's Turnabout

A totally different period dawned when in 313 CE the emperors Constantine and Licinius decided that henceforth Christianity would be a tolerated religion. The new circumstances in which the Christian church found itself are reflected in one of the regulations of the council of Arles in 314 CE, which held that those who lay down arms in a time of peace are excluded from communion.³⁹ In his work *The death of the persecutors* Lactantius displays a clear triumphalism. In the new situation he does not refer to the commandment to love and pray for one's enemies anymore. In his view God had destroyed all persecutors of his name,⁴⁰ which may be considered as an actualization of Paul's quotation from Scripture, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord'.⁴¹ We now continue, however, with our survey of how Jesus' teaching to love and pray for one's enemies has been transmitted in this period, in which the Christians were tolerated and gradually acquired more and more political influence and power.

2.1 *Texts Directed to Non-Christians and Arguments in Doctrinal Debates*

After Constantine's turnabout, apologetic or doctrinal appeals to Jesus' instruction to love one's enemies are far less frequent than before. In his work *The Preparation for the Gospel* Eusebius, in imitation of Origen, points to Plato's passage in which Socrates recommends this attitude to Crito.⁴² Eusebius wrote this work soon after the Christian religion had been permitted. His purpose was to show that to a large extent the Christian faith corresponds with Greek philosophy and had been prepared by it. Some years later Eusebius tried to demonstrate in his work *The Proof of the Gospel* that Jesus' teaching and the new covenant correspond with God's covenant that was valid prior to Moses, that is, in the time of the patriarchs and before. In this context Eusebius argues that Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, which is destined for the whole world and which contains his sayings on love and prayer for enemies, surpasses Moses' commandments, though without opposing Moses.⁴³

39 *Concilium Arelatense* 3; also *Canones ad Silvestrum* 3 (SC 241).

40 *De morte persecutorum* 50 (SC 39).

41 Rom 12:19; Deut 32:35.

42 *Praeparatio evangelica* XIII, 7 (SC 307); Plato, *Crito* 49B–E.

43 *Demonstratio evangelica* I, 6, 29–30; 70–71; 76 (GCS 23).

2.2 *Texts Addressed to Christians*

In the period after Constantine almost all references to Jesus' instruction that are relevant in this context are directed to Christians.

The Syrian, perhaps Antiochian, *Apostolic Constitutions* (ca. 380 CE) describe repeatedly that the apostles remind their audience of Jesus' instruction on love and prayer for enemies.⁴⁴ Thus at the same time the anonymous redactor also represents it to the Christians of his own time. Archaic features can be found in the liturgy of the faithful that is included in these *Constitutions*. After the dismissal of catechumens, baptizands, and penitents, the deacon says,

Let us pray for the enemies and for those who hate us; let us pray for those who persecute us because of the name of the Lord, that the Lord may calm their anger and appease the wrath against us.⁴⁵

After the epiclesis the bishop also prays 'for those who hate us and persecute us because of your name'.⁴⁶ Apparently these intercessions originate from the period before Constantine. It is not likely that the Christians who used these *Constitutions* belonged to a heterodox group that was persecuted itself.⁴⁷

Soon after the reign of Julian 'the Apostate' (361–363 CE) Gregory of Nazianzus rhetorically charges the deceased emperor with the injustice he had caused to the Christians by depriving them of several rights, although Julian, as a former reader in the church, knew that according to their own law they were not allowed to defend themselves or to repay evil for evil and were supposed to turn the other cheek and to pray for those who wronged and persecuted them.⁴⁸ Although Gregory formally addresses this discourse to the dead Julian, in fact his audience consisted of Christians. Remarkably enough he wonders whether the Christians had ever treated the pagans as Julian had treated the Christians. In this context he asks, 'Whose lives did we endanger?'⁴⁹ It is noteworthy that Gregory does not hold Christians responsible for the slaughter which soldiers had created among the brothers and nephews of Constantine after his death in 337 CE, on which occasion the young Julian lost his father and other relatives. Gregory blames the army for this and holds that Julian had been saved by Con-

44 *Constitutiones apostolicae* I, 2,1–3 (SC 320); III, 4, 4; VI, 23, 2 (SC 329); VII, 2, 2–6 (SC 336).

45 *Constitutiones apostolicae* VIII, 10, 16 (SC 336).

46 *Constitutiones apostolicae* VIII, 12, 46 (SC 336). Strictly speaking this text is not addressed to Christians but to God.

47 See M. Metzger, *Les Constitutions apostoliques* 2 (SC 329; Paris 1986), 16–18.

48 *Orationes* 4, 96–97; cf. 4, 124 (SC 309).

49 *Orationes* 4, 98 (SC 309).

stantine's son Constantius.⁵⁰ It has never been clarified who was responsible for the massacre.⁵¹

After Constantine, Jesus' teaching on enemies was part of the instruction to Christians and would-be Christians. Basil of Caesarea (priest in 364, bishop 370–379 CE) says to his catechumens,

Have you been robbed, do not take revenge, do people hate you, love them, are you persecuted, bear it, are you slandered, console. Die to sin, be crucified with Christ, turn all your love to the Lord.⁵²

Answering the question what love for the enemy entails, Basil distinguishes between the soul and the body. As for the soul, Christians have to rebuke their enemies since they are sinners; as for the body Christians have to do good to them if they need something for their livelihood. Answering the question whether it is possible at all to love an enemy, he confirms that heart-felt love (ἡ ἀγάπη ἐν διαθέσει) for the enemy is possible, since Christ also proved God's and his own love in his death for enemies, not for friends.⁵³

John Chrysostom, who was ordained priest in Antioch in 386 and patriarch of Constantinople in 398 CE, often criticized the habit to pray against one's enemies, for example, 'beat the enemy', or to pray for revenge. We see that the believers' practice was not always as lofty as their instruction. Chrysostom repeatedly reminds them of Jesus teaching his disciples to pray for their enemies.⁵⁴ He says that if you love your enemy, you do not good to him but to yourself, because in doing so you will be equal (ἴσος) to God.⁵⁵ He emphasizes that Christ's moral teaching applies to all, monks and lay people alike. This is also true for Paul's rule, 'Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good'.⁵⁶

⁵⁰ *Orationes* 4, 3; 4, 21–22 (SC 309).

⁵¹ A. Novikov, M. Michaels Mudd, 'Reconsidering the Role of Constantius II in the "Massacre of the Princes"', *Byzantinoslavica* 57 (1996), 26–32.

⁵² *Exhortatoria ad sanctum baptismum* 7 (PG 31, 440B). Also *De baptismo* I, 11 (SC 357); *Ad adolescentes* 7 (ed. Boulenger).

⁵³ *Regulae brevius tractatae* 176 (PG 31, 1200AB), which contains a quotation of Rom 5:8.

⁵⁴ *Quod non oporteat peccata fratrum evulgare* 10–11 (PG 51, 362–363); *Non esse desperandum* (PG 51, 365); *Hom. in Matthaeum* 60, 2 (PG 58, 587); *Hom. in Ioannem* 71 (PG 59, 387–388); *Hom. in II Corinthios* 5 (PG 61, 433–436). Cf. *De Lazaro* (PG 48, 1001–1002); *In illud, Si esuriet inimicus tuus* 5 (PG 51, 180–183); *De futurorum deliciis* 4–5 (PG 51, 350–352).

⁵⁵ *Hom. in ep. ad Hebraeos* 19 (PG 63, 142); cf. *Hom. in ep. ad Romanos* 19 (PG 60, 594); Matt 5:44–45.

⁵⁶ *Adversus oppugnatores vitae monasticae* 3, 14 (PG 47, 372–373); Rom 12:21.

In later Greek liturgies intercessions for enemies are far less conspicuous than in the archaic prayers of the *Apostolic Constitutions* quoted above. In the eucharistic liturgy ascribed to Basil the Great the priest briefly prays ‘for those who love us and those who hate us’, and for deliverance ‘from sword, invasion of foreigners, and civil war’.⁵⁷ In the liturgy attributed to Mark the evangelist the priest prays several times that God’s enemies, or the enemies of the church, may be humbled and scattered.⁵⁸ The prayer for the orthodox emperor reads,

Subdue under him, o God, every enemy and adversary, whether at home or abroad. Gird on your shield and armour, and rise to his aid. Draw your sword, and help him to fight against them that persecute him.⁵⁹

In the orthodox church the prayer for enemies has been relegated to the great compline in Lenten time, which reads, ‘To those who hate us and wrong us, Lord, give pardon’.⁶⁰

In the Western part of the Roman empire Ambrose of Milan endeavours to apply Jesus’ teaching to daily life. In his exposition of the Gospel of Luke (376–390 CE) he writes,

... the Lord Jesus goes beyond the oracles of the Law and the summits of philosophy. He would have us extend our kindness even to those who have wounded us. If an enemy, struggling against you with the weapons of war were to throw down his arms, out of pity you would spare him. If, from natural feelings of kindness, or in accordance with rules of warfare, you were to spare the lives of the vanquished, how much more mercy should be expected from those who are motivated by religion! If a warrior, despite his instinct to save his own skin, can restrain himself [from killing a vanquished foe], what should we not expect from a soldier of peace?⁶¹

57 F.E. Brightman (ed.), *Liturgies Eastern and Western being the Texts Original or Translated of the Principal Liturgies of the Church* 1 (Oxford 1896, 1965), 408.

58 Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, 115; 121; 130–131.

59 Brightman, *Liturgies Eastern and Western*, 128 (trans.: cf. ANF 7, 556).

60 H. Bos, J. Forest (eds), *For the Peace from Above: An Orthodox Resource Book on War, Peace and Nationalism* (Rollinsford 2011), 152–153.

61 *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* V, 73–76, quotation 76 (SC 45^{bis}); trans. Í.M. Ní Riain, *Commentary of Saint Ambrose on the Gospel according to Saint Luke* (Dublin 2001), 142, including the words between brackets.

This example shows that for his Christian audience Ambrose does not motivate the commandment of pity for the defeated enemy by referring to martial law but to Jesus' instruction. He points to Jesus himself who, on his way to the cross, behaved in line with his own words.⁶²

In his exposition of Psalm 118 he also addresses the theme of love and prayer for enemies as taught by Jesus and Paul, and explains that the exhortation 'to live at peace with all' applies to Christians, not to Jews and Gentiles, since they hardly love their own.⁶³ In his comments on Ps 118:104, 'I hated every way of injustice', he identifies God's enemies that Christians have to hate not as people but as vices, namely injustice, infidelity, depravities, and futilities of this world.⁶⁴ On Ps 118:113, 'Transgressors I hated, and your law I loved', he comments that Jesus teaches both to love our enemies, and to hate God's enemies, even if they are one's parents, wife, children, or brothers and sisters.⁶⁵ But how does this fit with the commandment to love God and the neighbour and to honour one's parents? What to do with 'the most beloved wife'? Ambrose solves the discrepancy by quoting Ecclesiastes 3:8, 'there is a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace'.⁶⁶

In his work on the duties of the church's servants (*De officiis*) he refers to the Stoic distinction between *officia media* and *officia perfecta*. *Officia media* are the ordinary duties such as not to murder, not to commit adultery, not to steal, not to bear false witness, to honour your father and mother, and to love your neighbour as yourself. Among the *officia perfecta* he counts to sell all your goods, give them to the poor and follow Jesus, to love your enemy, to pray for your persecutors, and to bless those who curse you. Someone who wishes to be perfect, as God is, also has to live according to the latter commandments.⁶⁷

With Ambrose's pupil Augustine we find a similar distinction. He thinks that only the perfect sons of God are able to love their enemies and to pray for their persecutors. He admits that each believer ought to strive after that, but in his view this can hardly be expected from the crowd; he would be satisfied if a plain believer were ready to forgive someone who has sinned

62 *Expositio evangelii secundum Lucam* V, 77–78 (SC 45^{bis}).

63 *Expositio Psalmi CXVIII* 12, 51 (CSEL 62); Rom 12:18.

64 *Expositio Psalmi CXVIII* 13, 28 (CSEL 62).

65 Luke 14:26.

66 *Expositio Psalmi CXVIII* 15, 15–17 (CSEL 62).

67 *De officiis* I, 11, 36–37 (ed. I.J. Davidson, vol. 1, OECS; Oxford 2001); cf. Cicero, *De officiis* I, 3, 8; III, 3, 14–4, 16 (LCL 30); Matt 5:48; 19:17–21.

against him, as it is expressed in the Lord's Prayer.⁶⁸ Augustine characterizes the more radical instructions as the perfection of mercy (*perfectio misericordiae*).⁶⁹ That, according to Matthew 5:39, Christians ought not to resist someone who is evil, is the highest righteousness and the highest development of mercy. However, the examples that Augustine gives do not concern one's behaviour toward enemies, but the compassion that is necessary for taking care of children, sick friends and insane persons, who often pester their guardians.⁷⁰ The compliance taught by Jesus does not imply, according to Augustine, that punishment is forbidden. Punishment is admitted on condition that it is imposed without hatred and vengefulness but out of love and in view of correction of the person to be punished. This is also true for capital punishment, which has to inspire a salutary fear and, if applied, to prevent that the punished person sin even more; its purpose is that 'the soul may be saved'.⁷¹ Just as John Chrysostom, Augustine rejects the habit to pray against other people, but he encourages them to pray against the dominion of sin (Rom 6:12). On the basis of 1John 5:16 he declares that one ought not to pray for apostate brethren; in his view certain sins committed by Christians are more heinous than the persecution by enemies. Therefore one should pray for enemies without any hesitation, but not for Christians who have sinned 'unto death'.⁷²

In order to lead the Donatists back into the Catholic church Augustine called for the armed assistance of the authorities. In 408 CE he writes to the proconsul Donatus that he preferred not to invoke this help, but he refers to Romans 13:1, 'There is no authority except from God'. Yet he beseeches that the Donatists be not treated harshly but with Christian moderation, since 'we love our enemies and pray for them'. The aim is their correction, not their death, that they may not fall under the penalty of God's judgment.⁷³ In this context Augustine also spoke his famous words, 'Love and do what you want' (in 407 CE). This implies that love should inspire a Christian to reconcile the Donatists with the Catholic church.⁷⁴

68 *Enchiridion* 17, 73 (BAug 9); Matt 6:12; cf. Augustine's general reminder of Jesus' exhortation to love one's enemies in *Sermo de generalitate eleemosynarum* (PL 40, 1229–1230).

69 *De sermone domini in monte I*, 21, 69–70 (CCSL 35).

70 *De sermone domini in monte I*, 19, 57 (CCSL 35).

71 *De sermone domini in monte I*, 63–65 (CCSL 35); cf. 1Cor 5:5, of which text Augustine acknowledges that it is not sure that it refers to death sentence.

72 *De sermone domini in monte I*, 73–77 (CCSL 35).

73 *Epistulae* 100 (CCSL 31A). For this episode see Paul van Geest's contribution to this volume.

74 *Dilige et quod uis fac*, in *In epistulam Ioannis ad Parthos tractatus decem* 7, 8 (Œuvres de

In 411/412 CE the tribune Marcellinus, a friend of Augustine, transmits the argument of the proconsul Volusianus that the Christian teaching concerning enemies does not suit the Roman *mores*. Moreover, the proconsul held that Christianity was the cause of the disasters that had struck the Roman empire.⁷⁵ This refers to the invasions of the Goths, Vandals, and other Germanic tribes. Augustine interprets the first argument in the sense that allegedly Christians are supposed to accept that their possessions are taken from them and should not retaliate the evils perpetrated by invaders who ravaged a Roman province. His reaction is that the instructions not to repay evil for evil and to turn the other cheek mean that *personally* one should refrain from the passion of revenge and be ready to forgive the offenders. In Augustine's view this attitude, by which evil is overcome with good, has a wholesome effect on society. Revenge has to be left to God's final judgment. If the state observes the Christian precepts, it will wage war with a benevolent intention toward its adversaries, and after their subjection it will treat them with mildness and justice. From John the Baptist's reply to soldiers in the Gospel of Luke (3:14) Augustine concludes that the Christian doctrine does not condemn wars as such, since the soldiers were not told to discard their weapons and to leave the army. Furthermore, he refutes the opinion that the Christian emperors could be blamed for the disasters that had struck the Roman empire, arguing that there had been even greater calamities during the reign of non-Christian emperors. In his view God had come to rescue the empire by persuading men to practise voluntary poverty, continence, benevolence, justice, concord, and true piety.⁷⁶

Less-known Christian leaders also transmitted Jesus' teaching concerning love for enemies. Chromatius, who became a bishop in Aquileia in 388 CE, preached about it without any restriction concerning the identity and behaviour of the enemies, although his exposition of Jesus' words was possibly destined for a limited audience.⁷⁷ He takes into account that martyrdom may be the consequence of a Christian's love for enemies. He gives a spiritual interpretation of Jesus' instruction to go two more miles with someone who forces you to go one mile. If an unbeliever or someone who has not yet achieved knowl-

Saint Augustin 76). See M.-F. Berrouard, 'Dilige et quod uis fac', in C. Mayer, K.-H. Chelius, A.E.J. Grote (eds.), *Augustinus-Lexikon* II (Basel 2002), 453–455.

75 Augustine, *Epistulae* 136, 2 (CCSL 31B).

76 *Epistulae* 138, 9–17 (CCSL 31B); also *Epistulae* 46, 12; 47, 5 (CCSL 31A); *De civitate dei* XIX, 7 (Œuvres de Saint Augustin 37).

77 *Tractatus in Matthaeum* 25; 26, 1–2 (CCSL 9A); B. Dümmler, 'Chromatius von Aquileia', in S. Döpp and W. Geerlings (eds.), *Lexikon der antiken Christlichen Literatur* (Freiburg, Basel, Vienna 2002³), 147.

edge of the truth refers to the one God, the Creator of all things, a Christian has to lead him to the knowledge of the Son and the Holy Spirit as well, since faith in God the Father is not sufficient.⁷⁸ Probably Chromatius has both pagans and Jews in mind, as well as Arians.

In the 30s of 40s of the fifth century CE Peter Chrysologus, bishop of Ravenna, acknowledges that for a soul that is pressed down by the flesh it is impossible to love its enemies and to pray for its persecutors. Yet he thinks that God, who gave this commandment, also gives the strength to keep it. He urges his flock, saying,

Brothers, by giving this command God did not will that his servants be subjected to enmities, but he gave such an order in order to remove enmities; and he wanted enmity to be calmed by love, rage to be restrained by charity, and to exchange enmity for benevolence. Brothers, whoever destroys anger by love, whoever makes a friend out of an enemy, a brother out of a foe, a holy person out of one who is unholy, a religious person out of a sacrilegious one, and brings a Christian out of a pagan, whoever does these things imitates God.⁷⁹

Two sermons by Valerian of Cimiez (near present-day Nice), from the fifth century CE, are suffused with the same spirit.⁸⁰ This also holds true for a homily that has erroneously been attributed to Augustine,⁸¹ two sermons from the *Opus imperfectum in Matthaëum* (traditionally ascribed to John Chrysostom)⁸² and a sermon from the sixth century that has been preserved under the name of Origen.⁸³

We see that time and again preachers called attention to this aspect of Jesus' teaching. To this conclusion we should add, however, that the appeals to love enemies and to pray for them entailed a missionary attitude toward pagan unbelievers and heretics, and that at the same time the Jews were severely blamed for the death of Christ. Sometimes—or perhaps often—the virulent criticism of non-Christian Jews was in fact directed to Judaizing Christians and to Arians who rejected Christ's divinity. This is the case, for example, with

⁷⁸ *Tractatus in Matthaëum* 25, 1, 5; 3, 2 (CCSL 9A); Matt 5:41.

⁷⁹ *Sermones* 178, 2 (CCSL 24B); trans. W.B. Palardy, *St. Peter Chrysologus: Selected Sermons* 3 (FaCh 110; Washington D.C. 2005), 350.

⁸⁰ *Sermones* 12–13 (PL 52, 728–735).

⁸¹ *Sermones* 72, 1–6 (PL 39, 1859–1862).

⁸² PG 56, 698–704.

⁸³ PLS 4, 859–864.

Chromatius and John Chrysostom.⁸⁴ Apparently these Fathers did not see any contradiction between their lofty appeals to love the enemies and their overtly hostile words on the Jews.

3 Conclusion

We conclude that Jesus' radical instruction on love and prayer for enemies, which he had given as a programme for his disciples, has been received and transmitted by Christians of the subsequent centuries as a most serious injunction. Some of them knew that Greek philosophers had also recommended this attitude, but they insisted that their writings or examples had not reached the illiterate and plain people, in contradistinction to the influence of Jesus' teaching. It is difficult to establish, however, how far Christians practised his message of love and prayer for enemies. Before Constantine his precepts were probably taken quite seriously in relation to non-Christians. Jews were also considered enemies for whom Christians had to pray.

After the Constantinian turn the church was confronted with new questions, since Christians became influential in local and imperial governance and thus could decide to exercise violence. At face value this seems incompatible with Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount. Ambrose and Augustine thought that a Christian government was allowed to wage war against enemies, but had to treat them mildly once they were subjected. They applied Jesus' instruction to the personal readiness to abstain from revenge and to forgiveness, and less to the authorities' political responsibilities.

Other Christian leaders expounded Jesus' teaching without any reticence, but we may assume that they mostly had the Christians' personal lives in view. It is doubtful, however, how far the injunction to love the enemies was also applied to the Jews, who were blamed for deicide. 'Heretics' also could not always count on the love of Catholic Christians, as other contributions to this volume attest as well.⁸⁵

84 F. Thelamon, 'Les vaines illusions des juifs incrédules selon Chromace et Rufin d'Aquilée', in J.-M. Poinssotte (ed.), *Les chrétiens face à leurs adversaires dans l'occident latin au IV^e siècle* (Rouen 2001), 97–114; R.L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1983), 66–94; 116–127; F.J.E. Boddens Hosang, *Establishing Boundaries: Christian-Jewish Relations in Early Council Texts and the Writings of Church Fathers* (JCPS 19; Leiden, Boston 2010), esp. 109–123.

85 See, e.g., the contributions by Van Waarden and Bartelink to this volume.

Even if we acknowledge that the homiletic appeals to love one's enemies and to pray for them were necessary because the Christians were not inclined to practise these injunctions, it would be difficult to imagine that such sermons had no effect at all.

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